



PlayStation Portable

PLAYSTATION® 3

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Issue 027 January 2009 £5.99
eu.playstation.com

15

HEAVY RAIN

Sony gets real
World exclusive
report on PS3's
darkest game



Uncharted 2 shots and info
Hands-on with Killzone 2
Resident Evil retrospective
Every PS3 game scored



9 771752 210016
ISSUE 027 JANUARY 2009 £5.99



2008 IN REVIEW TED PRICE



THE UFC GAME OVERLORD II



WINNER OF "THE ONE TO WATCH" GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARD



Games for Windows



XBOX 360

Wii



**“RAISES THE BAR
FOR ALL WAR
GAMES”**

10/10 PSW

**“THIS IS A
WHOLE NEW
CALL OF DUTY”**

- **Eurogamer.net**

AVAILABLE NOW

**CALL OF DUTY®
WORLD AT WAR**

WWW.CALLOFDUTY.COM



PlayStation 2

NINTENDO DS

treyarch

ACTIVISION

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Welcome



The main perk of being a benevolent dictator with his own magazine is that you get to choose what goes in every month. That, and all the girls. So this month I've blown 14 pages on Resident Evil because I've completed every game in the series, I'm obsessed with its idiotic plot (which we've finally made sense of) and can't wait for the next instalment in March. Fill your boots, zombiephiles.

Next up: 12 sweet pages devoted to Heavy Rain. Stunning visuals, hugely ambitious design, a real-world setting and genuinely adult themes means it ticks pretty much all our 'want' boxes, and it was a no-brainer for this month's cover. The third big-hitter in our trifecta of exclusives is Uncharted 2: Among Thieves. The original remains the only game the entire team agree on, and getting the scoop on the sequel kept spirits up during the final, dark weeks of 2008. (Even dictators have to boost morale.)

Next month we reveal the result of the Game Of The Year votes, and plough into 2009 with the world exclusive review of Killzone 2. Thanks for all your support over the last 12 months, and see you on the other side.

Tim Clark
Editor-in-Chief
tim.clark@futurenet.com

COVER FEATURE



74

HEAVY RAIN

Behind the scenes with Quantic Dream's visionary game of crimes and choices.

Save
15%

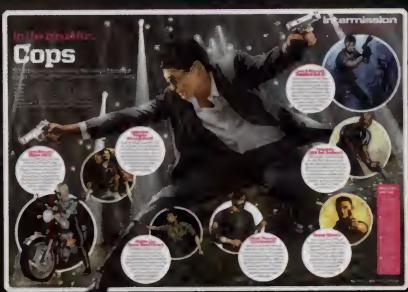
Off every issue
See page 36

FEATURES



54 ROOT OF ALL EVIL

Come for our massive Resi 5 hands-on, stay for our complete guide to the horror series.



86 IN THE MOOD FOR... COPS

The good, the bad and the blatantly corrupt. Say ello, ello to PlayStation's boys in blue.



08 UNCHARTED 2

Nathan Drake's next adventure revealed!

THE BIG 10 STORIES

GT Dev Makes A Car	12
Bland Of Brothers	14
Propa Spellingz	15
Resi Film: Not Rubbish	16
Reporting From Home	17
That Was 2008	18
PS3 Superfan Takes Control	20
Rock Kit Rated	22
Are There Too Many Games At Christmas?	23

AGENDA

Informer	26
How games go from good idea to boxed copy.	
Culture	28
Resi's tiny tribute and knit your own sackboy.	
Personal	30
Our man warms the bench in Be A Legend.	
Tech	31
Rummage in OPM Santa's sack of gadgets.	
Sony	32
It's loud, it's proud, it's the Gigajuke hi-fi.	
Events	34
Win an HDTV in our Christmas giveaway.	

PREVIEWS

Overlord II	38
Street Fighter IV	42
Dynasty Warriors 6 Empires	44
Killzone 2	46
Tom Clancy's Hawx	48
Bionic Commando	49
UFC 2009 Undisputed	50
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	52
The Latest On...	53



38 OVERLORD II

Murdering environmentalist elves? Finally, a fantasy game we can get on board with.

FEATURES

Root Of All Evil	54
We play Resi Evil 5 and celebrate the series.	
Inside The Alien Nation	68
Why the Chimera were almost lizards.	
PS3 in 2008	72
Every score for every PS3 game this year.	
Heavy Rain	74
Quantic Dream fleshes out its PS3 vision.	
In The Mood For... Cops	86
PlayStation's very own thin blue line.	

REVIEWS

Super Street Fighter II	
Turbo HD Remix	90
Sonic Unleashed	92
Crash Commando	94
Prince Of Persia Classic	95
The Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	97
Tom Clancy's Endwar	98
SingStar Abba	99
SingStar Vol 3	99
Disney Sing It	99
Locoroco 2	100
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2009	
	102



90 SUPER SF II TURBO HD REMIX

Ryu, Ken and co get a hi-def makeover. The boy Blanka? Still hideous, I'm afraid.



100 LOCOROCO 2

Sony's glorious singing blobs return in arguably the cutest game ever made.



Armored Core: For Answer	103
Burn Zombie Burn	104
Novastrike	104
Spin Jam	104
Need For Speed	
Undercover	104
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	
Theme Park	104
Buzz! Brain Bender	105
Online: Far Cry 2	106

DIRECTORY

PS3 Directory	110
---------------	-----

Every month only in

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Expert opinion on every PS3, PSP + PS2 game. The latest PlayStation news direct from Sony. Unrivalled behind-the-scenes access. In-depth coverage of the games you want to play. Features you won't find anywhere else. More pages, more games, more PlayStation than any other magazine.

Next issue on sale
20 January



PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Who we are...

Tim Clark Editor-in-chief

Wasted entire week off playing Master League and listening to 5 Live. Or: *living the dream*.

Game of the moment
SSII Turbo HD Remix
New year's resolution
Start own religion



Leon Hurley Commissioning editor

Saw Heavy Rain. Bought French sweets that cut our mouths like razor blades.

Game of the moment
Fallout 3
New year's resolution
Remember passport



Nathan Ditum Reviews editor

Stubbornly spent the month criticising SSII for being 'too retro'. In other words: he's not very good at it.

Game of the moment
FIFA 09
New year's resolution
Give every game 7/10



Ben Wilson Deputy editor

Destroyed our last shard of credibility by taking a key Sony contact to see McFly live in concert.

Game of the moment
Street Fighter IV
New year's resolution
Move to Boston



Rachel Penny Agenda editor

Her beaming smile kept Team OPM sane during the Xmas frenzy. Her drawer full of Syndol helped, too.

Game of the moment
LittleBigPlanet
New year's resolution
Be nice to Ditum



Helen Woodey Operations editor

Applied her usual 'smash all the buttons as fast as I can' method while trying to beat Tim at SSII. Lost. Heavily.

Game of the moment
SSII Turbo HD Remix
New year's resolution
NEVER back down



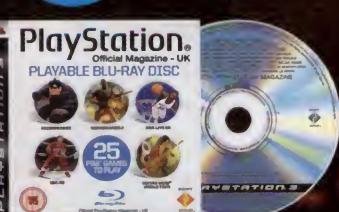
Write to the team at opm@futurenet.com

Subscribe to OPM now



ONLINE
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/POM/P027

TELEPHONE
0844 848 2852 quoting reference P027



To order an issue of any Official PlayStation magazine, just call **0844 848 2852** or visit myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street,
Bath BA1 2BW, United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0) 1225 732275
Email opm@futurenet.com Web futurenet.com

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief Tim Clark tim.clark@futurenet.com
Deputy editor Ben Wilson ben.wilson@futurenet.com
Art editor Mark Wynne mark.wynne@futurenet.com
Deputy art editor Steve Gallagher steve.gallagher@futurenet.com
Operations editor Helen Woodey helen.woodey@futurenet.com
Commissioning editor Leon Hurley leon.hurley@futurenet.com
Reviews editor Nathan Ditum nathan.ditum@futurenet.com
Agenda editor Rachel Penny rachel.penny@futurenet.com
Assistant producer James Jarvis james.jarvis@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Writers Matt Elliott, Jon Hamblin, Dave Harrison, Dave Houghton, Louis Pattison, Kim Richards, Joel Snape, Steve Williams
Production Paul Fitzpatrick
Designers Debbie Braiding, Nick Cox
Photography Heidi Laughton, Rob Scott

Creative director Robin Abbott
Design director Matthew Williams
Editorial director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING

Sales director Malcolm Stoddley malcolm.stoddley@futurenet.com
Advertising director Mark Hanrahan mark.hanrahan@futurenet.com
Ad manager (print) Emma Cull emma.cull@futurenet.com
Ad manager (online) Andrew Church andrew.church@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Dan Lessons dan.lessons@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive Oliver Chislett oliver.chislett@futurenet.com
Sales executive Alastair Williams alastair.williams@futurenet.com
Sales executive Mark Woolridge mark.woolridge@futurenet.com
Central agency sales director Jude Daniels 0207 042 4195
Central agency sales manager Kerry Nortcliffe 0207 042 4153

MARKETING

Marketing campaign manager Tom Acton tom.acton@futurenet.com
Brand marketing director Russell Hughes russell.hughes@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION

International Account Manager John Lawton john.lawton@futurenet.com
Trade marketing director Rachael Cock rachael.cock@futurenet.com

PRINT & PRODUCTION

Head of production Richard Mason richard.mason@futurenet.com
Production manager Rose Griffiths rose.griffiths@futurenet.com
Production co-ordinator Vivienne Turner vivienne.turner@futurenet.com
Buyer Colin Polis colin.polis@futurenet.com

LICENSING

Head of international licensing Tim Hudson tim.hudson@futurenet.com
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244 Fax: +44 (0) 1225 732275

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED

Publisher Richard Keith richard.keith@futurenet.com
Publishing director James Binns james.binns@futurenet.com
Chief operating officer Simon Wear
UK Chief executive Robert Price

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone our UK hotline on 0870 837 4722
Subscribe online at myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 20 JANUARY
Printed in the UK by Southernprint on behalf of Future.

Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. Tel: 0207 429 4000

{ Want to work for Future
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs }



A member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations
51,533
1 Jan - 31 Jun 2008

Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines, websites and events for people who share a passion. We publish more than 170 magazines and websites and 100 international editions of our titles are published across the world.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

Chief Executive: Stevie Spring
Non-executive Chairman: Roger Parry
Group Finance Director: John Bowman
Tel +44 (0) 20 7042 4000 (London)
Tel +44 (0) 1225 442244 (Bath)

© Future Publishing Limited 2008. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used or reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Limited is at Beauford Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.



The text paper in this magazine is totally chlorine free. The paper manufacturer and Future Publishing have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.



Available on PSN in 2009

**WIN
Killzone 2**

Register at opmhd.co.uk to be the first to find out more about Official PlayStation Magazine High Definition – and for a chance to win a copy of Killzone 2!

Exclusive demos, betas and videos
from the makers of

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Register for more info at opmhd.co.uk



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

Dream car

Citroen/GT5 lovechild is a real beauty.

► **Page 12**



Genero-men

Why PS3's big action heroes look similar.

► **Page 14**



PS3 keypad

We test the typing add-on.

► **Page 15**

Rock gear

Complete guide to peripheral compatibility.

► **Page 16**



Zombie hit

Why the new Resi movie is, shockingly, ok.

► **Page 22**



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



1 The big man is back

Nathan Drake returns in *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves*, hunting for the secrets of Shangri-La

Sorry sackboy, but ever since the release of last year's *Uncharted*, Nathan Drake has been *hands down* our favourite PS3 hero. He's unlike anyone else, brilliantly combining the sort of clumsy qualities we recognise in ourselves – cowardice in the face of physical danger, (hopefully) charming ineptitude in moments of crisis – with others we only dream of having, like a mean eye for head-shots and a witty wisecrack for every occasion. The quality of his first adventure – through

the sweltering jungles of... somewhere, on the trail of a lost fortune belonging to his ancestor Sir Francis – was so high that a follow-up was always just a matter of time. And now, finally, we've scooped the first shots and info on his return, courtesy of LA-based developer Naughty Dog.

Smuggler's run

Here's what we know. Like the first game, and the tradition of matinee adventures it follows, *Uncharted 2* is

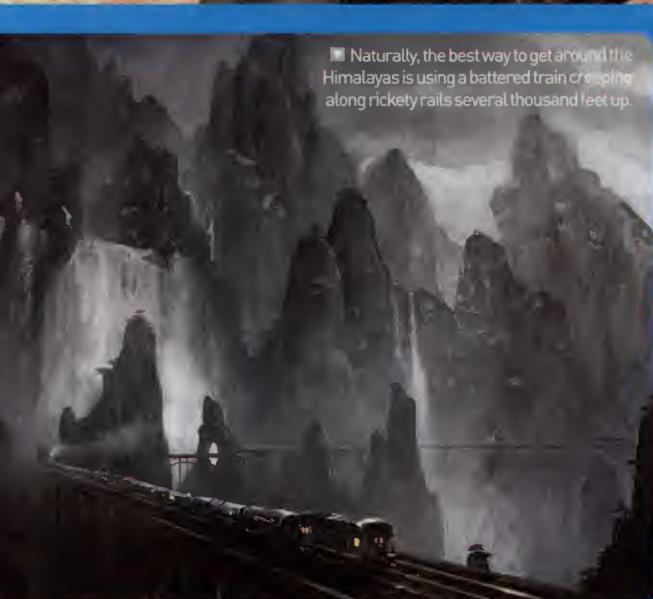
based on one of those unexplained meeting points between myth and mystery (the *Ark Of The Covenant*, *King Solomon's Mines*) which strike a chord in the imagination and make for kick-ass stories. Subtitled *Among Thieves*, Drake's new adventure follows the path taken by explorer Marco Polo on his way home to Venice following a 18-year stay in the court of the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan. Polo left China with 600 men and 14 ships which – so the story ➤



EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
PlayStation.
Official Magazine UK



■ The palette of sandy brown and lush green is the same, but there's notably more detail now. And after the stunning original, that's really saying something.



■ Naturally, the best way to get around the Himalayas is using a battered train crashing along rickety rails several thousand feet up.

goes – were heavy with untold treasures. But by the end of the 18-month voyage, only a single ship and 18 men survived...

Despite writing a famous account of his travels in the Orient, Polo never revealed what became of those lost at sea. His last words were, "I have not told half of what I have seen", which as well as being a really cool and enigmatic way to sign out is also a pretty *incredible* place to kick off a new adventure game.

And that's exactly what Drake does. We catch up with him in Nepal, as the city is torn apart by gunfights and Drake searches for a temple that will lead not only to the resting place of Polo's sunken fleet, but also reveal the explorer's secret mission to find

the mythical utopia of Shangri-La and a great treasure – called the Cintamani Stone – hidden there.

Naturally there's some competition, and racing against Drake to find the stone is a powerful criminal and his hired army of mercenaries. The taut cover-based shootouts from the first game return, then, but with tons of tweaks and improvements. For instance? Drake can now carry riot shields and explosives during firefights, has new acrobatic abilities like free-climbing and monkey bar swinging, and [a niggly but crucial thing] grenades have been given their own button to make them much more combat friendly.

Big strides have been made with the AI, too, answering our (minor)

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



EXCLUSIVE SHOTS

PlayStation.



■ There are new sneaky hand-to-hand moves for Drake, like this nasty, silent strangle hold for stealthy kills.

Epic!



■ Things they didn't mention in *Lonely Planet*: Burning cars, no shields and murderous mafias rates.



Dangerous!

complaint that the original *Uncharted*'s bad guys were a bit rent-a-goon. They now come in various classes with differing abilities, and won't stand around looking confused if they think they've heard you. Give yourself away and they'll hunt you down no matter how long it takes, even if means jumping over complicated obstacles.

So long, sweetheart

In slightly sadder news, Drake's companion Elena Fisher appears to be out of the picture (the actress

who plays her, Emily Rose, has recently hit the medium time on TV shows like *ER*). The silver lining is an Australian called Chloe Frazer (eyes left). In contrast to Elena's clean-cut, girl-next-door type, Chloe operates in the same lawless circle of bandits as Drake himself, and is even more reckless than our hero. Obviously, we're welcoming the new arm candy.

All that, and of course it looks stunning – even so early on. Seriously, this is the best Christmas present any of us have had this year. Please mum: no more self-help books next year.

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves will be out in late 2009. We'll have more shots and information next month.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



■ While it has no plans to put its collaboration with Polyphony into production, a Citroën representative tells us, "Certain features – like the colour, carbon touches, and design 'features' – might appear on future models." Roll on a fuel-cell-powered 789bhp Picasso...

2

GT dev makes a car

Polyphony collaborates with Citroën on 789bhp concept

It was only a matter of time before Gran Turismo developer Polyphony Digital crossed the line between fastidiously recreating other people's cars and designing its own. Unveiled at the Paris Motor Show, this mid-engined, two-seater concept coupe is a working replica of an original car now available for download as part of GT5 Prologue's Spec III update. The project is a

collaboration between Polyphony boss Kazunori Yamauchi and childhood friend, Takumi Yamamoto, who happens to work on the Style Citroën design team.

Saxo appeal

Designed in just nine months, the GTbyCitroën marshals four fuel cells to deliver a mighty 789bhp and has a stealth bomber-style rear conceived

specifically to give gamers maximum visual drama as they play. Kaz is clearly delighted by the results. "To see the car take shape in-game and then for real has been a truly unique experience as our work normally stays in the digital world. I just hope I can get behind the wheel and drive it on a real race track!"

Drive the GTbyCitroën now by downloading the latest version of GT5 Prologue (Spec III) from the Store.



Concept



In-game



Rear view



Takumi Yamamoto (left) designed the car with Polyphony's Kazunori Yamauchi (right).



Nathan Hale

Shane Carpenter

Starkiller

3

Bland of brothers

Why do all our action heroes look the same?

Character actors

Nathan Hale is your classic military man and the star of *Resistance 2*. **Shane Carpenter** became the square-jawed poster boy for disappointment in *Haze*. **Starkiller**, meanwhile, played Darth Vader's beach in *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*, and **Jet Brody** works the scars and cybernetics for *Fracture*. Finally, **Cole** is the generic star of Sony's forthcoming superhero sandbox adventure, *inFamous*, due out in May.

The buzzed dark hair, lantern jaw and powerful shoulders are instantly recognisable. From Nathan Hale to Jet Brody, the heroes of PlayStation's biggest action games look so alike they could be clones. Speak to any developer and they'll tell you how long they spent carefully researching and developing their hero's rugged features. So why do we always end up with the same rugged alpha male?

According to Beth Christiansen, a character artist for *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*, one reason is that it acts as a type of visual shorthand. "The fastest and easiest way to set up a character is to fall back on visual elements that the viewer will

immediately identify with a type of archetype. There are common themes that identify a hero, or idealised figure: tall stature, muscular build, idealised proportions." Christiansen told us it's a way of tapping into the player's subconscious, subliminally telling them that the hero is someone special. Those thoughts are echoed by Paul Armatta, producer on *Fracture*, who explains how his team came up with a formula for their hero. "Jet Brody starts with a mix of GI Joe and Rambo and adds in a little John McClane and Han Solo."

Christiansen says there are technical factors, too. "The way that

the character looks on-screen during gameplay is a major consideration. Often, the proportions of the body are pushed even further, because the silhouette of the character needs to be read from a great distance, and while moving around on the screen." So a slender Zac Efron type just isn't going to cut it. Sorry ladies.

You've got male

According to psychologists, macho looks come with emotional baggage. "Super-male faces are associated with characteristics such as dominance, aggression and therefore perhaps anti-social behaviour," explains Tim Valentine,



Jet Brody

Cole

professor of psychology at Goldsmiths University. Anti-social behaviour might not be what you want from a next door neighbour, but it's perfect if you're looking for someone to kick an alien's face in.

Even the short, military-style hair comes with a hidden agenda, due to differences in cultural expectations. Valentine told us, "Short hair is ethnically more ambiguous," which could help heroes be more appealing to a worldwide audience. In contrast, the androgynous teenagers with Toni & Guy haircuts in Japanese RPGs like Final Fantasy ensure a more niche audience. Jeff Carroll, producer at Red Faction developer Volition says, "Visuals that mean one thing in one region can mean something totally different in another. It's very difficult to balance."



Dev talk

"I disagree that he [Hale] represents the traditional FPS archetype. Other than the hair, you're right about that. He has to have short hair, he's in the military."

Ted Price
President, Insomniac

And the truth is that, as gamers, we like our men macho and military, and woe betide the developer who tries anything different. When the new Bionic Commando was first unveiled gamers complained about his whole look, and by far the biggest gripe was his new, trustafarian-style dreadlocks. As long as that happens, developers are going to keep playing it safe. It looks as though the attack of the clones is here to stay.

Bored of the bland or like your heroes handsome? Tell us what you think at opm@futurenet.com.

The Big 10



Stories everyone's talking about

4 Propa spellingz

Why the new keypad peripheral is a godsend



Typing on the keypad feels similar to using a Blackberry.

GG M8 LOL BFF!!! Hopefully the days of messages like that, and having to ruthlessly cull our friends list as a result, will soon be over. The new wireless PS3 keypad, on sale now for £24.99, makes tapping out messages to trusted comrades/bitter rivals during online games much easier. Two arms on the keypad's back clip it snugly over the top of your DualShock, with its own bespoke **START** and **SELECT** and PS buttons preventing any loss of functionality. Above these buttons sit an additional three. The first two instantly take you to your messages or friends list. The third, meanwhile, enables mouse-like cursor movements by dragging your finger across the keys. It's the keypad's only significant fail – stick with the analogue stick for browsing the net or navigating the XMB. A blue Shift key and orange Alt key sit on the top corners with the On/Off switch located down the right side. Lastly there's a USB port – essential for you to keep the keypad charged – along the top edge.

Stroke of genius

Using the keypad becomes second nature rapidly, and it works superbly. It was supported in all ten of the games we tried it with. Chatting to fellow members of our club in FIFA 09 was significantly faster and easier; we saved a stack of time inputting details for created wrestlers in WWE Smackdown vs Raw 2009; and keeping up with fast streams of chat in the Home beta was a breeze. And as proof that even the fattest of fingers will have no problem getting to grips with the small keys, we typed this story in Google Docs on the PS3 browser in just under seven minutes.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

5

Rock kit rated

We check which instruments work with what

There are two good reasons for not buying all the assorted guitars and drum kits that come with the likes of *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*. Firstly, the combined cost of all that fake plastic rock is enough to cripple the economies of most developed

nations, let alone the disposable income of your average bedroom headbanger. Secondly, the resulting nightmare of dongles, straps and bulky drum kits is almost impossible to store without a custom-built house extension. Here, then, is our guide to

the inter-compatibility of PS3's various instruments and games, to make it easy for you to supplement your existing setup, or plan a new one from scratch. God bless rock 'n' roll.

Got a rock setup you're pretty damn proud of? Then we'd like to see it. Send pics to opm@futurenet.com.

Instruments	Guitar Hero III	Guitar Hero World Tour	Guitar Hero	Rock Band	Rock Band 2	Rock Band 2	Rock Revolution
Guitar Hero III Les Paul	✓ Looks and feels basic now, but the Les Paul that's packaged with the game is both durable and functional.	✓ Works fine with the GH update, but it doesn't have the World Tour guitar's touch-pad fret.	✓ Initially incompatible, but finally patched in September 2008.	✓ Works out of the box with no need for a patch.	✓ Rock Rev doesn't have its own guitar, so out of the box cross-compatibility was a priority.		
Guitar Hero World Tour Generocaster	✓ Designed by Neversoft to be backwards compatible, but the touch-pad fret is rubbish.	✓	✓ Needs a patch which is downloaded as soon as you load the game while on the nets.	✓ Support built-in without download.	✓ Works immediately, with no download.		
Rock Band Stratocaster	✓ Requires long-awaited patch download, then works perfectly.	✓ Works, but the Strat's lower fret buttons don't sub in for the GH Generocaster's touch-pad.	✓ If you just want a basic guitar, the quieter strum bar makes this feel less plasticky than GH III's Les Paul.	✓ Essentially the same as the improved Rock Band 2 Strat, so the functionality is identical.	✓ Works with no patch required.		
Rock Band 2 Stratocaster	✓ You'll need to download a patch first, but then it works perfectly.	✓ Works, although as above, the lower frets can't be used instead of the touch-pad.	✓ The Rock Band 2 Strat is the same as the original but with quieter buttons, so backwards compatibility is no problem.	✓ There's no better guitar with which to play Rock Band 2 than the one it's packaged with.	✓ No patch needed.		
Guitar Hero World Tour	N/A	✓ The only game that takes full advantage of the kit's unique pad and cymbal layout, with custom-designed note patterns.	✗ A sore point – even though Rock Band 2's been patched, the original Rock Band still won't recognise the World Tour drums on PS3.	✓ A recent patch fixes Rock Band 2 for the World Tour drums, but the second, orange cymbal isn't used.	✓ Reduce the 'lanes' (note colours) from seven to five in the menu, then aside from the fact the orange cymbal still isn't getting any love it works fine.		
Rock Band	N/A	✓ World Tour automatically reconfigures the notes to four colours and the kick pedal.	✓ Yes, though it might be worth upgrading to the Rock Band 2 kits if you want to use cymbals.	✓ Works fine, though you can't add Rock Band 2's upgradable cymbals to the Rock Band kit.	✓ Reconfigure from seven to five lanes in the menus and it works even better than the World Tour kit – no pad left out.		
Rock Band 2	N/A	✓ Reconfigures to four lanes plus the pedal. Even if you've got the upgradable cymbals, they'll only be recognised as regular pads.	✓ And you can use the cymbals too – they're simply duplicated versions of two of the four pads, so the note patterns are unchanged.	✓	✓ Again, reconfigure from seven to five lanes and it works fine.		
Rock Revolution	N/A	Konami has talked up inter-compatibility but due to the kit being unavailable in the UK, this remains unconfirmed.	Also unconfirmed. But as Rock Band remains unpatched for the World Tour drums we think it's unlikely.	✓ The same patch that fixed the World Tour drums also sorted the Rock Rev kit.	✓ The only way to get full, seven-pad functionality from the Rock Rev kit.		



6

Reporting from Home

How we went bowling, played pool... and got hit on

Bull races

Red Bull is the first brand to sign up to have its own island in Home. Instead of a drinks stall for getting your avatar jacked up on caffeine, the island will offer a virtual version of the Red Bull Air Races. "It's an easy environment for brands to take that first step into gaming," said John Beasley, Red Bull's marketing manager. Yes it's interactive advertising, but at least in this case that translates to 'free stuff for users'.

Last time we visited Home it was to interview Sony boss Shuhei Yoshida. Back then, it was full of dancing journalists and not much else. Now though, it's packed with people on the pre-release beta trial. And, inevitably, they're almost all 'doing the robot'.

The shopping centre still has empty shelves, and most of the people in the main square seem to be idle, with little 'zzz' icons hovering over their heads. It turns out everyone is in the bowling alley – the place to be if you like mini-games and socialising with Mohican-sporting avatars. There are pool tables, tenpin bowling, and an arcade – and all you have to do is play

them is walk up and hit . One guy caused a stir with his Echochrome themed bodysuit – he told us he won it by playing the Echochrome mini-game on one of the machines.

Queue balls

The only catch to all the free fun is that the number of people who can bowl, play games or shoot pool is limited, so there's a bit of thumb-twiddling while you wait your turn. As we waited, our pretty blonde avatar is pounced on by a gang of men, who chat us up while dancing around us like 'N Sync escapees. You can talk to anyone around you

with a headset, but most people seem to favour typed TXT SPK. Those we spoke to from the so far overwhelmingly male, 20-something populace were happy with what they've found, complaining only that there are too many men looking for women, and that you can't listen to your own music – both of which could change once the software goes on full release, hopefully as you read this.

So if you see a pretty blonde called teamopm sitting on her own by the Icebreaker arcade machine, ask her to dance. No Swayze stuff, mind.

Keep yourself up to date on Home at its official site: playstationhome.com.



Bowling!



Pool!



Romance?



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

7

That was 2008

We revisit the PS3 highs and lows of the last year

So this is Christmas, and what have you done? Well, if you're PS3, you've had a strong second year, in which big hitting series like Call Of Duty and Grand Theft Auto continued to dominate. There were letdowns too, like the crackers European pricing of Rock Band and Mirror's Edge's failure

to find an audience. So before you bust out the party poppers, neck a pint of eggnog and prepare to cheat on Faith with an even hotter, younger mistress (Sheva, we'll see you in February), take a moment to look back over the past 12 months. A time in which OPM turned 25 (issues, not

years, although our hair did go white overnight like The Exorcist); Trophies made their long awaited debut; and we were blessed with LittleBigPlanet, MGS4 and Bioshock. (About bloody time, too...)

What has been your highlight of 2008? Share it with us by emailing opm@futurenet.com

Big in LA

E3 is huge for PS3, with the announcement of a new 80GB model and a stack of tantalising game footage – Infamous, God Of War III and LittleBigPlanet are the stars.

Jul



End of Days

Sony cans shooter Eight Days (originally seen at E3 2006) and a next-gen version of The Getaway due to what a spokesperson calls, "The redistribution of resources and budget".

Jun



We want grey

More MGS news. This time it's enviable faces all round on these shores as gamers across the pond get a very, very limited edition 60GB gunmetal grey PS3 to mark the release of Guns Of The Patriots.



Blockbuster beater

PS3 gets its oft-rumoured movie and TV download service. 300 films and 1,200 TV episodes (Family Guy, Prison Break and Buffy are highlights) are readily available from launch, but the bad news is it's confined to the US until 2009.

Points mean prizes

Trophies, Sony's answer to Xbox Live's Achievements, make their debut on PSN. Super Stardust HD is the first game to feature them via a downloadable patch, with Uncharted: Drake's Fortune and Pixejunk Monsters soon following suit.



Not fazed by Haze

In what must rank as one of the year's biggest disappointments, much-hyped shooter Haze finally hits the street after a series of delays – and it's distinctly average, scoring 6/10 for its "clichéd script and patchy execution".



Sweet Jaffe cake

Discussing God Of War III, former series guru David Jaffe writes on his blog, "I ain't no fanboy but this mother f***ing game looks like nothing you've ever played, and you can hold me to that when this thing hits and when they start showing gameplay footage."



Not you, Cliff

Betting for the Christmas Number One opens with Call Of Duty: World At War hot favourite at odds of 3-1, just ahead of FIFA 09 (4-1) and Need For Speed Undercover (5-1). Monopoly, at 150-1, is the rank outsider.



King of sport

OPM breaks bread with ex-Microsoft cheerleader and new boss of EA Sports, Peter Moore. He praises Take Two, Konami, and Sony for the quality of their sports titles, says NHL 08 is the sports game of last year, and tells us to "stay tuned on rugby and cricket – they're not benched".

Dec

Nov

- The Force is weak**
Getting the year off to a cracker start, Namco Bandai does a deal with LucasArts to include Darth Vader in the PS3 version of the otherwise brilliant Soulcalibur IV. Did not want. (On the plus side, 360 gets Yoda. Hah!)



Jan



COD victory

To the surprise of no one, Call Of Duty 4 strolls away with the OPM Game Of The Year gong for 2007. It gets more than double the votes garnered by second placed Ratchet & Clank: TOD.



- Changing of the guard**
Shuhei Yoshida, a 22-year Sony veteran who originally green-lighted ICO, is named president of SCE Worldwide Studios, replacing Phil Harrison – who becomes president and directeur général délégué of Infogrames, Atari's parent company.

Feb

War is over

The final nail in HD-DVD's coffin is hammered home by mega-studios Warner Bros and New Line Cinema when they confirm that they will only support Blu-ray from May onwards.



No longer cross

The Church Of England admits the controversy surrounding Manchester Cathedral's appearance in Resistance turned out to be beneficial. "Teachers tell us that teenagers in particular are interested to see a building which they thought was fictional," director of communications David Marshall reveals to OPM.



Mar

Thanks a million

UK PS3 sales hit seven figures in the UK, 47 weeks after the console's release. In comparison it took 50 weeks to sell a million PS2s, while Xbox 360 took 60 weeks to hit the milestone.



A classic returns

OPM exclusively reveals Aliens: Colonial Marines, a shooter based on the classic 1986 sci-fi flick. The dev reveals COD4 will be an influence and confirms acid blood is in. Acid blood! Want.

Apr

Fiddy hilarity

Team OPM is reduced to tears of laughter on 1 April when told a new 50 Cent title will feature the rapper blasting his way through 'Middle Eastern' terrorists. The smiles disappear when Blood On The Sand turns out to be a *real game*.



GT stalls

On the back of the release of Prologue, frontman Kazunori Yamauchi warns fans to be patient for Gran Turismo 5. "There's going to be a massive amount of cars and a whole new range of courses. That takes a lot of time, so it won't be [out] until at least the end of next year."



Persian makeover

The first PS3 shots of Prince Of Persia emerge, suggesting – eh? – that the royal freerunner has been coloured-in with crayons. Still, the gameplay looks good: signature acrobatics integrated into an open-world using an updated version of the Assassin's Creed engine.



MAG FTW

Sony announces its most ambitious PS3 game yet: 256-player MMO shooter Massive Action Game. Lead designer Andy Beaudoin promises to "immerse players in massive online battles on a scale never before seen on a console".

May

New kit

The Leipzig Games Convention passes off with little in the way of game announcements, but Sony reveals new hardware innovations that do excite: a limited edition 160GB PS3, PSP 3000 – and an upgraded edition of the PSP Slim & Lite – and a Clip-on PS3 keypad (see p15).



Resi defence

Months after Resident Evil 5 was labelled as racist by website Black Looks, producer Masahiro Kawata defends his game: "We set the game in Africa and then obviously we had to make the indigenous people. We don't take racism lightly."

Sep

Rip-off Rock Band

Almost a year since its release in the US, EA and MTV Games release Rock Band on PS3 in the UK – at an astonishing £179.98 for the game and instruments. Harmonix's Greg LoPiccolo cites shipping costs of the oversized box and retailer mark-ups as the reasons behind the decision.



More war

Infinity Ward boss Vince Zampella tells us that his team is "in the throes" of designing the follow-up to Call Of Duty 4 – and, once again, it will have a Modern Warfare setting. We shoot AKs in the air to celebrate.



EA's title win

FIFA 09 and PES 2009 are released a fortnight apart, with both games getting 9/10 in OPM, and the team split over which is the favourite. There's no such debate among the buying public, who make FIFA the second fastest selling game of the year behind GTA IV.

Big Daddy lands

A mere 14 months after its Xbox 360 release, BioShock finally surfaces on PS3 – and it's still incredible, scoring 10/10 in OPM. Our colleagues/rivals are impressed too – it goes on to average an amazing metacritic score of 95.

Oct



8

PS3 super fan takes control

Kit Windsor reveals how he got his game on

"The main inspiration was Final Fantasy, believe it or not," says Kit Windsor. Unable to play consoles for seven years because of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Windsor decided he had to play Final Fantasy XIII after seeing a trailer for the game. "I sat there thinking of ways that I could make a controller."

Having had no luck finding a PS3 pad designed for people with limited movement, Windsor used his passion for electronics to design one

himself, and then found engineer Mark Felling to build it. It works by sensing tiny movements and breathing motions, and can replicate almost every function of a Sixaxis pad. At the moment Windsor is playing Wipeout HD and Mirror's Edge, and posting his reviews at gamingkitsune.blogspot.com.

It was an expensive project that took years, with funds coming from friends and family. The kit is now available for others to buy from broadenedhorizons.com/modular

gaming.htm. Windsor says, "The reason I originally posted this story on the forums was to spread the word about this technology." It's changed his life – and he hopes it will change other people's too.

Reader talk

"I want to send the video of the controller that I made to whoever is doing Final Fantasy XIII to show them how much they inadvertently inspired me."

Kit Windsor



Sip and puff straws

These are the two sip and puff straws that are connected to sip and puff straws. When I blow into one straw, it activates one switch and when I blow air out of the straw it does a second switch. An array of these devices controls four switches of my device.

Joystick control

These are the two joysticks that are being held in front of my mouth. On the microphone attached to my headset are two switches. (Their view is obstructed by the joysticks.)

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



Master box

"This is the main control box that all the switches plug into. There's a total of 25 3.5mm mono phone jacks for \otimes , \circlearrowleft , \circlearrowright , \circlearrowup , \circlearrowdown , R3, \square , \triangle , L3, \diamond , as well as the menu key. With specially made adapters, it can also be used with other controllers."

Feet switches

"These are my feet switches. I tilt each foot from one side to the other to hit each switch. I generally use these as one of the joysticks. That's why my feet are bending so strongly. These are my most resistant switches and require the most amount of pressure to activate."

Chopping board

"This is a chopping board that has four switches that my next door neighbour Greg wired up. They were screwed into the board by my friend Antonio. They are positioned in a square formation and I slide a bottle cap around to hit each one."



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

9

Resi film: not rubbish

Capcom's new CG spin-off in quite-good-really shocker



■ How do you make a quality Resi Evil film? Dump the real actors and go CG.

Monster hit

Degeneration director Makoto Kamiya is most famous for directing Kaiju movies – Godzilla-style brawls where giant monsters leather the crap out of each other around over-populated cities. Unsurprisingly, he manages to get a huge monster into this movie too, with the climax featuring a beast to rival the oversized bosses from the series.

Having sat awkwardly through three movies of Milla Jovovich high-kicking her way through the zombie horde while wearing only a cocktail dress and a frown, Resident Evil fans could be forgiven for abandoning any hope of a decent cinematic adaptation. Then in rolls Capcom with its own full-length CG animated movie, *Resident Evil: Degeneration*. Set between the events of Resi 4 and 5, it unites Claire Redfield and Leon S Kennedy for the first time since the second game, in a zombie-filled actioner that goes off like a Stryker shot to the head.

The first half of the movie takes place in an airport – a terrorist group have unleashed the T-Virus on an

unsuspecting public, and Claire (with obligatory cute kid in tow) is stuck in the middle. Luckily, she has some experience with the undead (as we see in some cracking flashbacks to the events of Resi 2) and manages to hold her own until Leon arrives on the scene with a new partner in tow – a young recruit called Amanda, who has an Ashley-sized crush on her Blacktail-wielding boss. Later, the action shifts to WilPharma HQ, a company that seems to be carrying on where Umbrella left off. Apparently the firm will play a role in Resi 5 too.

Infectious fun

So is it worth a watch? Definitely. The voice acting is great, with the cast

from the games gleefully wrapping their tongues around the trademark nonsense dialogue. Take Claire's line after being invited to the WilPharma HQ: "Sure. It's not like I'm scheming to infiltrate your organisation for my own devious means." There's plenty of humour – just wait till you see the idiot zombies trying to get off the plane. Fans will also dig the great little in-jokes (Redfield wielding a red and white umbrella), cameos from the games (who wouldn't want to see more of Resi 4's Ingrid Hunnigan?) and some fantastic looking (if not-quite-gory-enough) action. Paul WS Anderson? This is how it's done...

Resident Evil: Degeneration (certificate 15) is out on DVD (£19.99) and Blu-ray (£24.99) on 12 January.



■ Look at lovely Claire's sad eyes. It's been another tough day.



■ Good to see Vince from the Mighty Boosh still getting work.



■ "Right, that's the housework done. Now for those zombies."

10

Are there *too* many games at Christmas?

OPM's naughty and nice disagree over the festive feast



Too many games? Madness.
Unless you're the sort of person who has a nervous breakdown in Sainsbury's every time you have to choose a breakfast cereal, more choice is only ever a good thing. Remember the early days of PS3 when there was only a small selection of must-play games? I certainly wasn't skipping through the streets whistling a happy tune, and I don't remember anyone else doing it either.

Happy holidays

The important thing to remember is that while you might not have time to play *Fallout 3*, *LittleBigPlanet*, the new *Call Of Duty*, *Dead Space* and *Guitar Hero World Tour* all at once, none of these games are limited edition. They're not going to magically dissolve before you get that chance to try them. If anything, it just means there's going to be plenty of bargain pre-owned copies in the shops right at the time when your pockets are bulging with



No
Says multi-tasking flibberty-gibbert
Rachel Penny

Christmas money. Thanks Dancer! Thanks Prancer!

Yes, there might be a bit of a feast then famine culture in the gaming world, but the big pile of amazing releases that are on sale now will be enough to see you through the next few months at least. I like the fact that so many games come out at Christmas. It's exciting. And it's the one time of year that I can get away with staying in to drink Snowballs and laser super mutants all day. And once I'm done with *Fallout 3*, I know there's plenty more to perk up a long, cold, miserable January. What more could any right-thinking PlayStation fan want?

Does the Christmas games bonanza fill you with joy? Email 'YES' to opm@futurenet.com



Yes
Says resident Scrooge and father on a budget
Nathan Ditum

I don't *like* having to make a choice between which brilliant games to play at Christmas. Admittedly, I say this as a man who always felt wrenching pangs of guilt when, as a child, I'd have to choose just *one* of my teddies to take away on holiday and leave behind all the others. But there's a more practical side to my argument too – namely, how can anyone afford to play everything essential, let alone everything decent?

Money matters

Let's take a look just at the games which have scored 9/10 and above in our last two issues. *Resistance 2*? That's £40. And *Mirror's Edge*? £80. *Far Cry 2* makes £120, *Midnight Club* £160, *Bioshock* £200, *Fallout 3* £240,

Guitar Hero World Tour £280 (without instruments). So we're talking nigh-on £300 and that's without *Dead Space*, *Prince Of Persia*, *Tomb Raider*, *Endwar* or *LittleBigPlanet*. Who's really got that kind of money to throw around just before Christmas?

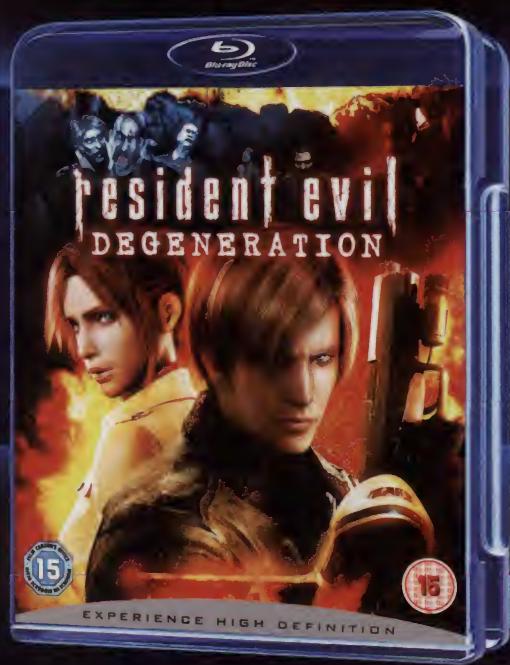
The sad thing is – and here we go back to the cold, weeping stuffed toys waiting for me in the dark – this means some of these uniformly excellent games won't be getting the love they deserve. And the saddest thing is, it's likely to be new, inventive but unfamiliar stuff – *Mirror's Edge*, *Dead Space* and (God forbid) *LittleBigPlanet* – that suffers most. Considering those long summer stretches we go through each year without a triple-A title in sight, this is nuts. I get that publishers would rather gamble on the Christmas frenzy, but come on, won't somebody *please* think of the teddy bears? I mean games.

Are you Tiny Tim who's only allowed one slice of the turkey? Email 'NO' to opm@futurenet.com

resident evil DEGENERATION



A NEW OUTBREAK
OF TERROR



HIGH DEFINITION PICTURE AND SOUND
ALL NEW CGI FILM PACKED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES:

- INTERACTIVE PICTURE IN PICTURE
- THE "GENERATION OF DEGENERATION" FEATURETTE
- A LOOK AT THE **RESIDENT EVIL 5** VIDEO GAME *High Definition*

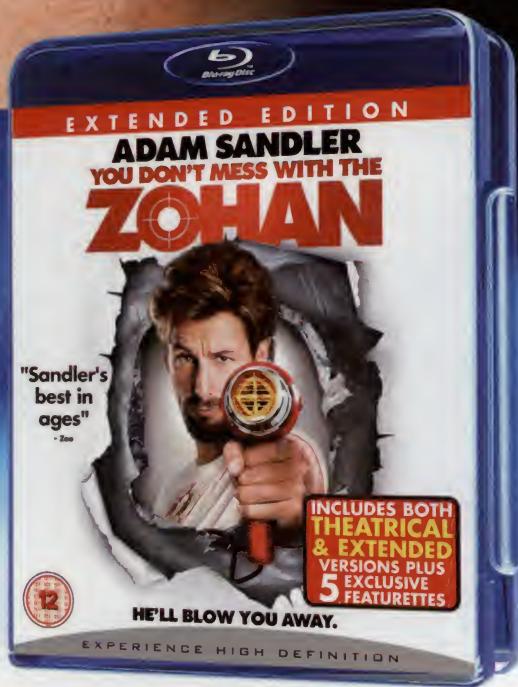


OUT JAN 12 AT **hmv**
hmv.com



© 2008 CAPCOM CO., LTD. and Resident Evil CG Film Partners. All Rights Reserved.
Layout and Design © 2009 Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. All Rights Reserved.

HE'LL BLOW YOU AWAY ON BLU-RAY



DAZZLING PICTURE 5x THE RESOLUTION OF DVD
CRYSTAL CLEAR DIGITAL TRUEHD 5.1 SURROUND SOUND
INCLUDES BOTH THEATRICAL AND EXTENDED CUTS
PLUS 5 FEATURETTES EXCLUSIVE TO BLU-RAY

COMPATIBLE WITH
PLAYSTATION® 3

High Definition



OUT JAN 19TH AT **hmv**

hmv.com

COLUMBIA PICTURES

HAPPY MADISON



© 2008 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc and Beverly Blvd LLC. All Rights Reserved.
© 2009 Layout and Design Sony Pictures Home Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Agenda

PlayStation news,
views, happenings
and people...

26 **Informer**

Hot game issues
investigated by
OPM's crack team.

28 **Culture**

The PlayStation
people who make
gaming great.

30 **Personal**

Hot opinion from
those in the know.

31 **Tech**

Shiny things you
can't live without.

32 **Sony**

New kit beamed
down from the
Sony mothership.

34 **Events**

Your gamer's
guide to the
month ahead.

How a game gets made

PSN senior producer
Phil Gaskell explains
how the magic happens..

Whether you're playing a small but perfectly formed, downloadable gem or a AAA big budget blockbuster like GTA IV, the games you play have been through a long journey before they're sent out into the world. We spoke with PSN senior producer Phil Gaskell to find out how Sony guides its games from concept to Store-ready download. Here, in his own words, are the four main stages...

Concept

"Game concepts can be like buses sometimes. You can wait an age for one and then suddenly two or three turn up. If I'm excited about it then it's my job to get people higher up excited. At that point we make a decision: do we present it to the broader Sony executives, or do we work on the prototype? I've been to green light meetings where we've just done some static renders and talked through why we think the idea's great. And we've signed off on it. I've also been with actual playable prototypes where people can get hands-on. That's when we have to make a call about whether a game gets cancelled or not.

First Playable

This is a prototype in low fidelity. There's no



From tiny acorns...

Milestones in the development of Rag Doll Kung Fu



Mock-up

This is a static mock-up done for the green light stage to give people a flavour of how the next-generation version may look. It uses the original 2D characters from the PC game.



Build one

This is the first playable version of the game. At this stage the HUD is placeholder and the characters are still flat. First Publishable then improves lighting and adds high-fidelity characters.



Build three

This is the latest 'build'. The characters' facial expressions and weapons are now in place, while overall the graphics have a slightly glossier look. From here most of the work will be on fixing bugs.

sense in building something that's publishable when you're dealing with mechanics you might not understand. You may have to iterate quite a bit to make it fun. And the best way to do that is with low-polygon models. I have a game I'm working on at the moment with Housemarque - the guys behind Super Stardust. It's unannounced but the first prototype was done with just cubes. If it's fun with cubes it'll be fun with high-polygon models. What's important is that the core mechanic is done in high fidelity. So if what's important to your game is particle effects then that's the portion that really needs to be high fidelity.

First Publishable

At this point you know your mechanics, so you're going to build one portion of the game in high fidelity. And that's to set the benchmark for the rest of the assets you're going to use. For something like Wipeout HD, that might be one track with one ship going around. The ultimate is something that you could potentially ship on the front of OPM as a playable demo. It allows me to take it to Marketing and get people excited.

Alpha to Master

At Alpha you're into full production. All the jigsaw pieces are there, we've just not put the jigsaw together. It should be possible to play the game through but there will be bugs. The start of Beta is where the content is complete, and you're focused on fixing the bugs and getting the game ready to master submit and go out to the shops. The idea is that you look for ways to crash the game; you look for inconsistencies. They all get flagged. For every bug you get a certain number of points allocated. 26 points and a game fails Format QA. Anything below that and if you're willing to take accountability then QA are happy for it to go out. Often if you were to submit the game again, say you're going to patch the game, they'll ask you to fix those bugs at the same time. The lifetime support of titles is a new thing for us."

Fleshing out the process
PSN games have modest budgets compared to those on Blu-ray. GTA IV had a budget believed to be around \$100 million, and took a staff of up to 500 three years to develop.



RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

Hitman developer IO is working on the console version of Deus Ex 3, as well as another three new games.



LittleBigPlanet for PSP is being developed outside of Media Molecule and will hit the handheld next year.

Smackdown vs Raw 2009 DLC will feature Ted DiBiase, Super Crazy, Charlie Haas and Evan Bourne as playable characters.



EA is working on its own series of Rock Band-style games.

Along with the upcoming Aliens: Colonial Marines, Sega has another big licensed sci-fi shooter on the way.



Plans are in motion to bring government agent Jack Bauer back to console in a new 24 game.

A renowned UK-based studio is working on a brand new, astonishing-looking urban crime game set for release in 2010.



Evil eye Creator Warren Hart inserted lights in the munny's head for glowing eyes, but had trouble with the tricky on/off switch.

You're so munny Munnies are DIY action figures whose blank bodies can be decorated any way you like. Few receive this level of love and attention.

resident evil CHAINSAW MUNNY famousafterdeath.

028

Resi's sack toy

Tiny tribute to everyone's favourite madman

"I wanted to pay homage to a great game and a great villain," explains Warren Hart, Resident Evil 4 fan and first time munny customiser. He created this miniature menace in his spare time. "I made it on my kitchen table and never thought it would get this much attention," he told us.

Not that it was an easy job. "It was super hard to make," says Hart. "I had never made clothes for a doll – or anything for that matter." Hart also had trouble creating the glowing eyes that give Daddy

Chainsaw that extra-demonic look, subjecting himself to a rigorous work routine to get it finished. "It only took about five horror movies, one action flick and a lot of energy drinks to complete."

It was originally going to be for sale, but Hart has now decided to leave it on display at the Uberbot store in Florida instead. "Hopefully some crazy collector will come along and change my mind. Anyone want to bribe me?"

▼ Hart's a dedicated gamer – check out his PlayStation tattoo!



Want one, knit one

Craft mag reveals how to stitch your own sackboy

Here's something we thought we'd never write... It's time to put down the Sixaxis, pick up the knitting needles and stock up on sack-coloured wool. The latest issue of Simply Knitting includes a pattern that will show you how to make your own cuddly version of PlayStation 3's biggest icon.

"As soon as we saw sackboy we knew we could knit him – and because he's done in chunky yarn, he's quick to knit up," said an excited Miriam Macdonald from the magazine. "Knitted toys are massively popular and we're often asked for patterns for licensed characters, so when we saw sackboy we just couldn't resist him. We've had great fun dressing him up!"

We're not sure we've got the dexterity (or capacity for shame) to do the little man justice, but we've put an order in with grandma OPM already. There's more information over at simplyknitting.co.uk – and don't forget, if you do manage to knit your own, send us a photo at opm@futurenet.com.



▲ The pattern is in issue 49 of Simply Knitting, on sale now.

WHO SAID THAT? VIP quotes

"Set down the Guitar Hero; learn how to play an actual guitar." Nickelback's **Chad Kroeger** tells the kidz.



"We haven't announced anything yet... now f*** off!" **David Jaffe** on Twisted Metal.

"My kids play videogames." If only we could talk **Angelina Jolie** into adopting us.



Infinity Ward's **Robert Bowling** uses his blog to call out World At War's producer as "Senior Super Douche".

OPM HOT TOPIC

What's the most underrated PS game ever?



Barbara Gamlen
International PR manager,
LucasArts

"Ico. It's also the first game that made me cry. It deeply impressed me at the time, the rich, mysterious environments and the simplicity of the gameplay."



Rich Lemarchand
Lead designer,
Naughty Dog

"I think that The Mark Of Kri was years ahead of its time. Its stealth gameplay was very accessible and action-packed, and the art direction was absolutely staggering."



Jacob Minkoff
Lead designer, Blue
Omega Entertainment

"Ghost In The Shell. Its use of the Fuchikoma as a vehicle that could stick to walls and ceilings was innovative. No other ground-based shooter has been as truly three-dimensional."



Dave Matthews
Principal art lead,
Monolith

"This is tough. I'm torn between The Mark Of Kri and Ico. I can't decide. Can I please pass on a different question so I can have both of these answers?"





Coach, play me!

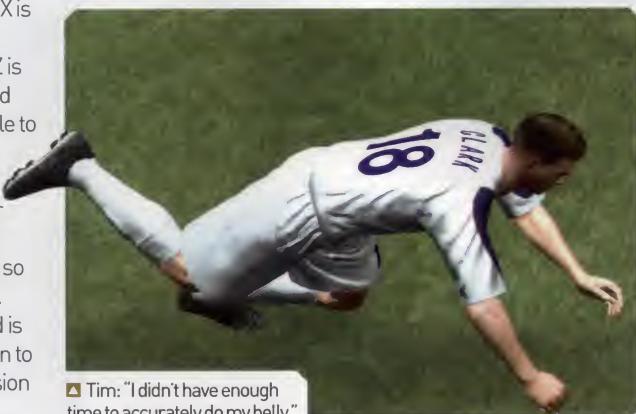
Tim Clark on becoming a legend in Pro Evolution Soccer 2009

There isn't enough space here to list all the things that are stupid and broken about PES 2009's 'Become A Legend' mode, but here are some highlights. 1) When you start out you have to play in the reserves for week after week. 2) If you play well, the manager will eventually let you train with the A team in yet more reserve matches. 3) Play better still and you might get picked for a place on the bench. But what constitutes playing well is arbitrarily decided by an equation that looks like $(X+Y)^2 = Z^2 - 2Y$, in which X is 'not giving the ball away', Y is 'wandering out of position' and Z is 'scything down Joey Barton'. And here's the real kicker: it's possible to go an entire half without even touching the ball. So when it does arrive you rush the pass or shank the shot and get dropped back down to the reserves. And so the crushing cycle begins again.

Yet for me, Become A Legend is the most exciting thing to happen to the series since the hacked version of PES 3 which had Coldplay's

scored one and set up the other. Transfer window looming? Ignore all the offers until they up the wages. Loyalty is for schmucks. (Actually wages seem to have no bearing on the game, and are therefore also broken.) Soon the game becomes all about ball retention, neat passes, finding space. It's like being a real footballer, only without the mobile phone orgies.

The real genius of Become A Legend – and it really is a special kind of idiot genius – is the fact it



Tim: "I didn't have enough time to accurately do my belly."

"It's like being an actual footballer, only without the mobile phone orgies."

Clocks as the menu music. And you can stop waving your hands around. I know Become A Legend is a shameless steal from FIFA's technically-better-in-almost-every respect Be A Pro mode, but the only respect that matters is that one game is PES and the other is FIFA and this dog is too old to start learning new stepovers.

Not a team player

So, given all the things wrong with Become A Legend, why do I love it? Because it makes you play the game entirely differently. Perhaps as some kind of satirical critique on the selfishness of the modern footballer, you cease caring about the team's performance and concentrate purely on your own. Beaten 3-2? A brilliant result if you

makes those moments when you actually do something game-changing, be it a slide rule assist, or a scuffed late winner, feel absolutely euphoric. When I scored my first goal (after two seasons I've scored three times, and that's counting the one that was given to Jonathan bloody Woodgate because it brushed his inner thigh) I ran around the room shouting. Tears filled my eyes. Joyous swear words filled my mouth. It was the best PES goal I've ever scored – not aesthetically, it was scuffed in from the six-yard box – but because the sheer relief after so much tedium, so much hapless calling for the ball only to be ignored, was overwhelming. Become A Legend is the Showgirls of videogame modes: it's so wrong it ends up being massively right.

MY GUILTY PLEASURE



Paul Fitzpatrick just can't bring himself to run away from **Monster Hunter**

There is something about Monster Hunter's jarring juxtaposition of horrific, limb-rending dinosaur violence and gentle domestic chores that exerts a tractor beam-like pull on me. Sure, the guy in the tavern with the eye patch may solemnly call it a 'quest', but as far as I'm concerned, heading out to pick up meat, vegetables and essentials is little more than 'doing the weekly shop', even if you do risk getting your throat torn out by the meat course. Yet, with those sun-kissed, rolling hills beckoning, and ample opportunity to whip out the T-Rex rotisserie along the way, it's a risk I'm always very happy to take. Want me to get you anything while I'm out? ;)





Minoru 3D Webcam

The twin lenses take images in stereo, which means you can take stills and video in 3D.

Yes: 3-bloody-D! Trust us, you'll be the talk of the alt.confused.busty newsgroup.

£65

minoru3dwebcam.com

Motorola Aura

It's the recession-busting phone with a 16 million colour screen. Perfect for calling the balliffs and begging them not to take the Christmas tree.

£1,285

motorola.com



Terry Turtle

Everyone loves a plastic turtle with turrets, right? Terry will spout 25 potty-mouthed outbursts as you tickle his motion sensor. Britney wouldn't raise her kids without one.

£18

firebox.com

Want that

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people



Angel And Devil Headphones

Either a way to honour the eternal, dichotomous struggle between good and evil, or just a chance to impress kooky girls with your cutie cans.

£8

avwatch.impress.co.jp

Drum Rocker Kit

Blow the redundancy money on a Rock Band-compatible premium kit. That will show them exactly how seriously you take hitting things with sticks.

£230

drumrocker.com



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press

Tech

Agenda

031



Public display

Full-colour LCD screen so you can explore your 'collection' in style. It lists track, artist and album info, just in case your dinner guest wants to find out which Rammstein LP you've been playing on repeat all night.

Sony Gigajuke

NAS-SC55PKE

Facing the music has never been so easy



£750

sonystyle.co.uk

In a nutshell

The only people who still buy hi-fi separates are men in wire-rimmed glasses who smell of rolling tobacco. The music of the future (really bleepy?) will be played by Sony's Gigajuke – a slab of sound that holds up to 40,000 songs on its hard drive. And lest you think it's a glorified iPod dock, this obsidian monolith can also handle music-making in multiple rooms.

What's so special?

You can rip songs straight from your CDs to the Gigajuke's hard drive at super speeds – a one-hour CD takes just four minutes. Once your music is stored you stream the tunes from the hard drive, via the speaker station, to the wireless speakers. You can even play different tracks from the hard drive simultaneously in different rooms. That means no more messy wires and no more arguments over which

Box fresh

No trailing wires means you can listen to different tracks anywhere in the house simultaneously. Mogwai in the kitchen, Philip Glass in the lounge and the High School Musical soundtrack in the bath. Oh, Zaquish!



room has the best acoustics for your drill 'n' bass odyssey. And if you're heading out you can transfer music directly from the hard drive to your phone, PSP or Walkman.

As part of the package you also get an iPod dock and an AM/FM/DAB radio tuner. Don't want to miss Alan Green blaming a referee for the global economic downturn on Radio 5 Live? Just record it to the hard drive to wince at later.

Tell me more...

Gracenote music recognition enables the Gigajuke to get the name of the artists and tracks you've ripped, and the X-DJ playlist system organises your music into 23 different moods, such as the 'party time' setting, for when you want the room filled with high-energy dance tunes, and 'relaxed' for the bitter morning after recriminations. "I saw you in the kitchen with him... I saw you."

The facts

80GB of storage space
40,000 songs
Wireless speakers
32bit S-MASTER digital amplifier
4.3" colour display
X-DJ Playlist creator
Gracenote music recognition

PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover + New entry

PS3

1	Call Of Duty World At War
2	Resistance 2
3	Need For Speed Undercover
4	FIFA 09
5	Tomb Raider Underworld
6	LittleBigPlanet
7	PES 2009
8	Motorstorm Pacific Rift
9	Fallout 3
10	Midnight Club Los Angeles

Source chart-track.co.uk

PS2

1	FIFA 09
2	Need For Speed Undercover
3	Call Of Duty World At War
4	WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009
5	Quantum Of Solace
6	Guitar Hero World Tour
7	Star Wars TFU
8	Lego Indiana Jones
9	Legend Of Spyro DOTD
10	Crash Mind Over Mutant

Source chart-track.co.uk

PSP

1	FIFA 09
2	PES 2009
3	Need For Speed Undercover
4	Football Manager 2009
5	Lego Batman
6	WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009
7	Midnight Club LA Remix
8	Star Wars TFU
9	Lego Indiana Jones
10	Wall-E

Source chart-track.co.uk

The PlayStation entertainment plan

Never spend a moment unfulfilled with our monthly guide

Monday



Tuesday

23

Issue 27 on sale
And you're holding it right now. Tell us whether we're on your naughty or nice list at opm@futurenet.com

29

So cool
Hard to think you could make the teen sensation any campier, but Disney's High School Musical: The Ice Tour pulls it off at the O2 Arena today. disney.go.com

Wednesday



Thursday

25

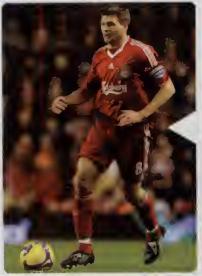
Happy Christmas
And why not celebrate the birth of the big J by entering our competition and winning an HDTV? activision.com

Friday

26

Down under
Begin weaning yourself off Turkey byproducts by heading to the cinema to see Baz Luhrmann's new epic: Australia. australiamovie.com

Saturday



28

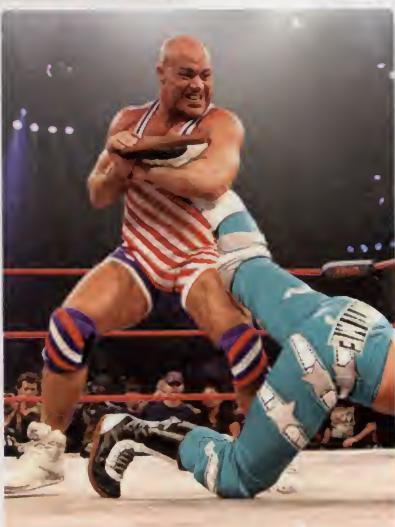
Paint the Town red
Newcastle 'welcome' title challengers Liverpool to St James' Park, live on Sky Sports 1 and HD. Kick-off is at 12pm. skysports.com

10

NFL Divisional Play-offs
A win today for the New York Giants would put them one game away from a second consecutive Super Bowl. nfl.com



12



Spiralling down
The once pudgy-faced pop moppets Keane are back, and ready to hawk their oddly '80s sounding LP at the O2 Arena in London. keanemusic.com



11

Winning formula
Admire the sort of cars you're only ever going to get to drive with a Sixaxis at Autosport International at the NEC. autosport-international.com/public



16

Fast Carr
Moon-faced funny man Jimmy Carr fills The Alban Arena with snarky one-liners. jimmycarr.com



20 January
Issue 28 on sale. Subscribe now on page 36.



21

Blood sport
TNA Wrestling brings violence, body blows and its trademark six-sided ring to the NIA in Birmingham. tnawrestling.com



23

Father figures
Relying on the old comedy formula that inept men plus kids equals hilarity, Role Models hits cinemas. rolemodelsmovie.com



24

Hanging tough
The New Kids On The Block take a break from middle age to top up their bank accounts at the O2 Arena. nkotb.com



Win the war, and a TV, with Call Of Duty

Get a PS3 an HDTV and eight games!

It's Christmas, and with the help of the elves at Activision we've got our best ever prize to give away. Namely a Samsung 37" LCD TV, a PS3 and eight, yes eight, games. There's Call Of Duty: World At War, Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows, Fracture, 007: Quantum Of Solace, Rapala Fishing Frenzy, Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon, Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa and Star Wars: The Force Unleashed. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question correctly.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS By entering you are agreeing to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and related third parties. If you do not want to receive this info please text the word 'STOP' at the end of your message. Texts will be charged at £1.00 plus your standard network rate. By taking part in a competition, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at www.futurets.com. The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries after the start date 16/12/08. Prize draws will take place on 21/01/09. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the draw. Only UK residents aged 18 and over may enter. No employees of Future Publishing Ltd or any company associated with this competition, or any member of their close family may enter. Prizes are as stated and no alternatives, cash or otherwise, are available. Future Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury caused by any prizes won. Publicity may be given to any winners and/or entrants and their names and/or photographs printed. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Where prizes are offered on behalf of an associated company these prizes are provided in their entirety by these associated companies. Future Publishing Ltd cannot be held responsible for any failure to provide prizes as specified and all enquiries relating to such prizes will be referred to the associated companies. You may have to provide additional information. Receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with [amongst other things] the Competition Rules. No purchase necessary. Winner lists are available by written request within three months of the closing date from Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Who's the developer of Call Of Duty: World At War on PS3?

A TREYARCH

B INFINITY WARD

C NAUGHTY DOG

Text using the word 'COD' followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name or address to 87474. Or enter at futurecomps.co.uk/27cod. Winners will be picked at random from all correct entries.

Closing date: 20 January 2009



FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit OPS2 #42

Putting a potato-headed hard man with mad staring eyes and a snapped pool cue on the cover of your magazine means one of two things: you're either attempting to frighten casual browsers in WH Smith into buying your mag, or you've got the world exclusive reveal of **The Getaway 2**. That'd be a little from column A, a little from column B, then.

Also revealed in news were exclusive shots and info about spy sequel **Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow**, Sony's secret (and ultimately unsuccessful) plan to make **This Is Football 2004** better than FIFA and PES, and the new, thoroughly made-over version of EA's Knockout Kings, which would eventually become **Fight Night 2004**.

Previews, meanwhile, saw us particularly impressed by the unflinching professionalism of the development team behind **James Bond 007: Everything Or Nothing** ('Somewhere there's a man hunched in front of a computer screen staring intently at a semi-clothed picture of Shannon Elizabeth'), while we also squeezed in updates on future classic **SingStar**, long-awaited (hey, what's new?) sequel **Gran Turismo 4** and technofear shooter **Cold Winter**.

Top of the reviews pile this month was Rockstar's tabloid-baiting (but genuinely ace) **Manhunt**, which scored a 9/10 despite all the controversy ('It's killing for culture and we're loving it'). Otherwise it was a very quiet month for new games, with the likes of **Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines**, **Battlestar Galactica** and **Grooverider: Slot Car Racing** duking it out for worst score of the month. (**Rise Of The Machines** just edged it, with a barrel-scraping 4/10.)

FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play when the boss isn't looking



Isn't It Fun To Throw Ancient Stuff

Turns out it really is. Play as an OAP, chucking priceless artefacts at waves of shuffling mummies, and gassing them with farts when they get too close.

snipurl.com/57dlb



Flight Of The Hamsters

Everyone had one as a child, and now you can get revenge for the cage cleaning and vicious, bone-deep bites by catapulting cartoon hamsters into the sky.

snipurl.com/57ddx



Super Obama World

Politics is a sombre and complicated world, so the only way to properly celebrate the election of America's new president is by bouncing on lipstick-smeared pigs. Obviously.

superobamaworld.com

Subscribe

Save money and bag
yourself an Intempo IDS01
Unplugged iPod dock*

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK



To celebrate the launch of the new Infusion dock and DAB radio, our pals over at Intempo have sent us 100 of their IDS01 Unplugged iPod docks (pictured above) to give away. They're cool, sleek and one could be yours when you subscribe to Official PlayStation Magazine!



Intempo Infusion Dock

With DAB and FM radio, the Infusion is an iPod dock of the highest order. Its five watt speakers and menacing bass mean it's no pushover, either. You can get your hands on one from Amazon or Comet for £99!

How to subscribe

1

ONLINE

myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/pom/p027

2

TELEPHONE

0844 848 2852 quoting reference P027

Overseas - myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/POM

Why subscribe?

- You'll save 15% off the cover price and pay only £16.54 every three months...
- ...plus we'll send you one of these brilliant Intempo IDS01 Unplugged iPod docks!*
- Every issue and Blu-ray disc is delivered free of charge, straight to your door!

Offer for UK Direct Debit subscribers only. You will receive 13 issues per year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. *The gift is subject to availability. In the unlikely event of stocks becoming exhausted, we reserve the right to substitute with items of similar value. If at any time during the first 60 days you are dissatisfied in any way, please notify us in writing and we will refund you for all un-mailed issues. Closing date: 20 January 2009. Order Ref: P027.

38

OVERLORD II

It's like project management on Team Satan as you take control of a swarm of demonic minions and lay waste to the Roman Empire.

PlayStation[®] Official Magazine - UK

Previews



Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

Let's just pretend that we're like the minions from Overlord II and you're our ruthless master. You demand a constant supply of gaming treats and treasures and we're only too eager to please, scurrying off to find them.

Two of the biggest gems we lay at your feet this month are Street Fighter IV (p42) and Killzone 2 (p46). SFIV has reigned age-old debates about who has the best skills with which character. "You can't defeat my Chunners!" one minute, "My Ryu's unstoppable" the next. It's like Orpington College 1991 all over again.

Killzone 2, on the other hand, has everyone united: there's nothing more handsome on PS3 – it makes real life look dull by comparison. Fortunately, it's got the ballistic punch to back up all that pretty, which means it's shaping up to be the shooter of next year.

Lastly there's Tom Clancy's Hawx (p48) which is like Ghost Recon with afterburners. Jets, missiles and bogeys – it's Top Gun 2009. Babsy not Goose!



42

STREET FIGHTER IV

Stop looking up her skirt – she'll punch your face off if she catches you. Find out why we're punch-drunk in love with Capcom's reborn brawler.



44

DYNASTY WARRIORS 6 EMPIRES

The men might wear prettier dresses than the girls, but that's okay when they can decimate entire armies with a frilly twirl.



50

UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

Smackdown is for babies. This is a real fighting game. The only hard and fast rule is: don't kill your opponent. Well, try not to kill him. Okay, just don't let the ref see...



Can't wait?

Play these

**Overlord: Raising Hell**(PS3, Codemasters)
Catch up with the story and get some practice in minion management with the original game.**Freedom Fighters**(PS2, EA)
Hone your leadership skills by ordering the brave resistance boys around as the commies invade New York City.**Overlord II**

△ Evil ◎ Army ✕ World □ Domination

Welcome to the fantasy game for people who hate elves. It might be set in a magical land, but here the gnomes are suicide bombers, the pointy eared folk are whiny environmentalists and the fairy queen dumps her royal duties to be your girlfriend.

The original game, Overlord: Raising Hell, was largely overlooked. What you missed out on was the chance to be the bad guy, conquering the land by ordering your minions to do all the hard work – think Pikmin, only with fugly goblins. It was basically a Tolkien

parody, but this sequel, which uses the same innovative mechanic, has more universal references. Most obvious is the Empire, a Roman-esque culture that has taken over the world, ridding it of magical creatures and filling it with fancy architecture, senators and centurions. Then there's Florian the whining Greenpeace elf, with his blonde dreadlocks and his band of hippies. He's trying to collect all the persecuted magical creatures and take them to sanctuaries... sanctuaries that you discover and decimate. It's the Overlord way. Among the other



enemies you'll have to face are vicious pandas and the Eradicators, Empire troops who use a giant vacuum cleaner to suck up mystical creatures.

This time out you play as the original Overlord's heir, who's been raised by minions to be their new master. You're free to cast spells and use your massive sword to smite everything in range, but the idea is to get your minions to do it for you. There are four types, each with their own skill: the battle-hardened browns, the fire-throwing reds, the stealthy greens and the healing blues. All you have

Dev: Honor Format: PS3 ETA: Summer 2009 Pub: Codemasters Dev: Triumph

Quick pitch

Little helpers

Four types of minion at your beck and call make murdering and pillaging a breeze.

Nether regions

Choose new quests and hang out with your girlfriends at your home base, the Netherworld.

Spelling test

Each one of the Overlord's spells has two different effects to choose from. It's buy one, get one free!



▲ The Empire has developed its own super soldiers called Champions, who'll charge at your minions like bulls. Bulls with swords.

to do is direct them to solve puzzles, overpower your enemies and, erm, club baby seals to death.

Riding school

Your minions' abilities have evolved, which should make for more varied quests and richer puzzles. They've now got mounts to ride into battle – we saw the red's fire salamanders, the brown's wolves and the green's spiders in action. The secret to taming these mounts is a boss fight – for the spiders there's a battle with their leggy mother. It wasn't about simple hack and slash attacks, but tactically using your force of 15 underlings. Using a mix of poison and pressure pads the mother spider was knocked off a ➤



▲ Growing up an orphan hasn't stunted the new Overlord's growth.



▲ What's that festive smell? Ah, roasting peasants.

▲ Number of captions for this picture rejected so far on the grounds of taste and decency: 246. And very much counting...



▲ Seal bashing will get you in big trouble with the tree-hugging Soldiers Of The Sanctuary.



Preview



▲ The fearsome yeti is in fact a gentle gorilla-like beast, which obviously makes him that much easier to defeat when you get to the Donkey Kong-style showdown.



“The two styles of evil have direct and definite consequences...”

wall onto her back, where her vulnerable white belly was exposed. Once she was dead all the greens had to do was hop on their new creepy chums and they could skitter across walls – the perfect complement to the green's stealthy skills. In the offices of developer Triumph, they're known as Metal Gear minions, and there are plenty of assassination missions where using them will be essential.

As well as mounts the minions can

use things like catapults, ships and disguises. And the new possession spell means that the Overlord can also inhabit a minion's body, enabling you to control them directly and see through their eyes. Triumph is still debating whether or not it can get away with the minions shouting, “Enter me master.” We tried it out, dressing our minions in legionnaires' outfits, then possessing them and leading them to a catapult behind enemy lines. Controlling the



minions was as simple pointing at where we wanted them to go, though the camera system needs a little work.

One of the problems with the original was that the consequences of your choices, whether to smite the peasants or save them, weren't really

5 big questions Essential info for minion management

1 Where do they live?

There are different domains to explore, like the snowy town of Nordberg, jungles, countryside and the scarred Wastelands.

2 How do they fight?

Simply direct your minions to a target. Their tactics range from throwing fireballs to stabbing victims in the back.

3 How do I give them orders?

You don't have to send your minions off in bulk – you can instruct specific types to utilise their individual skills.

4 Is there multiplayer?

You can play splitscreen games where you get to compete for the prize of 'most dastardly Overlord'.

5 What happens when they die?

The priest minion can bring back your favourite followers, complete with any special items they were carrying.



Clubbed to death: there's more scope for minion mayhem now.

Who the hell is Overlord?

We take a look under his big shiny suit. Ew, gross!

Character history

As the son of the original Overlord, this guy hasn't had an easy life. After his father gets trapped in a hellish Abyss, he's rejected by the townspeople and thrown out into the snow, then rescued and raised by minions. Vicious, imbecilic goblins aren't exactly known for their child-rearing skills, so it's no surprise he's turned out to be a little bit angry and murderous. Ready to take on his father's role, he has to deal with the Empire, the powerful military regime which has taken control of the land.

Powers

As well as a distinctly oversized sword, the Overlord packs some serious spells, from classic fireballs to enchantments. On top of that he can command up to 50 minions at a time, the different varieties of which have specialist skills.

Speculation

Once he's finished off the Empire and killed all the unicorns, we bet our helmets there will be a Luke and Vader-style final showdown between the new Overlord and his dear old dad.



obvious enough, and you could make it through the entire game without being too much of a bastard. Not any more. Here there are two styles of evil – domination and destruction – and they have direct and definite consequences on the way your character develops.

Bad to the bone

If you're a power crazy control freak (honestly, who isn't?) then domination is for you. Instead of killing peasants you can enslave them, building your power slowly as they work to provide you with vital resources like life force, essential for creating new minions. Destruction is more of a scorched

Earth policy. It's all killing, all the time. You get an instant hit of bonuses, but not the long-term benefits. Deciding which path to take will now directly affect your Overlord's appearance and the spell system.

Every spell has two effects, depending on how long you charge it. For instance, use Evil Presence and a quick tap will send out a lightning hand to subdue and enslave enemies; hold it down, though, and your victims disintegrate. As you play, the game remembers your preferences and adapts to them, so it becomes harder to change your ways. If you favour destruction it will take less and less

pressure on the button to kill a target.

From the new, reactive spell system to combat that's been tweaked for smoother, sexier slaying, Triumph is really running with the original idea. This is a more ambitious world with bigger battles – some scenes will have 50 minions facing 200 Empire troops. On top of that the things that made the original such a rough diamond – simple minion controls, Rhianna Pratchett's mischievous script – have survived intact. So with any luck this time it will get the attention it deserves. After all, everyone knows that the girls like a bad boy. And that's why we're still wearing this leather jacket.

Dev talk



"I hope no one is going to complain that you can't be evil enough this time. If they do, they're clearly not trying hard enough!"
Rhianna Pratchett
Writer and narrative designer, Overlord II



Preview

Dev talk



"We want to recruit the lapsed SFII generation, bolster the community and revive the fighting genre."

Yoshinori Ono
Lead designer,
Capcom



Category: Games Format: PS3 ETA: 20 February Pub: Capcom Dev: Capcom

Street Fighter IV

△ Focus ○ Attacks ✕ Revenge □ Gauge

First law of SFIV: master the focus attack. Because however well you know the returning characters here – if you played SFII back in the day you'll immediately be firing off Yoga Flames, Sonic Booms and Claw Dives on instinct alone – you'll get smashed quick if you don't learn the new stuff.

Focus attacks are moves that shield you from a single hit while you charge them (done by holding mid-punch and mid-kick). So say you're Guile, and Ryu slings a fireball from close range while you're charging a focus attack – it will hit you but inflict no damage, and you can then nail him with your focus attack (in Guile's case, a quick, hard chop to the

chest) by releasing the buttons while Ryu is in the fireball recovery animation. But be warned: some moves, like Sagat's Tiger Knee, can break this one-hit shield.

Charge for longer and you'll see a white flash that means your attack is strong enough to make your opponent crumple when hit, opening them up to further damage. Fully charge your attack and it becomes unblockable, enabling you to chain together a series of moves.

Revenge is sweet

While mastering focus attacks, you'll also want to keep an eye on the circular meter in the bottom corner. This is the revenge gauge, and it means that even if you take

the beating of your life, you always have a shot at pulling yourself back into the fight. As you take damage the meter fills and, once full, you're able to pull off an Ultra – an extended series of OTT moves that are guaranteed to make you look like a genius (when they connect) or a pillock (when you mistime them, or they're blocked). Ken, for instance, chains a Dragon Punch into a series of huge kicks that send his foe into the air, then nails a Flaming Dragon Punch on their way down for good measure. (This is all done by pressing $\downarrow\downarrow\rightarrow\downarrow\downarrow\rightarrow\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet\bullet$.) And any new feature that makes Ken look cool after years of utter lameness has to be a winner. (We're all Ryu men, here.)





For the first time ever, Ryu's master Gouken is playable. And deadly, too.



Key ingredients

SFIV's killer recipe



1 Old faves meet new blood.



2 Tough girls in hot outfits.



3 Super-pretty environments.



4 The best bosses return.

If you've ever referred to this pair as Chunli and Eddie, you'll love SFIV more than any other videogame. Ever.

Could Be A Contender

C&C: Red Alert 3



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

The premise

In a parallel universe Albert Einstein uses time travel to kill Hitler and accidentally starts WW3 in the future.

The reality

It's an RTS so you'll be organising massive battles by issuing orders and managing resources.

The hook

It doesn't take itself seriously: time travelling tanks, armoured attack bears, psychic Japanese school girls... and Gemma Atkinson.

The inspiration

The original Command & Conquer, in which the good GDI took on eco-terrorists The Brotherhood Of Nod.

The chances

RTS games are usually borked by using a pad instead of a mouse so it all depends on the control scheme.

PlayStation
043

Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub EA Dev EA Los Angeles

Source Amazon.co.uk

Pre-Orders The punters' top three



1 Street Fighter IV

The quasi-3D visuals, outrageously amped-up moves and plump roster of fighters - old and new - mean this is a major return to form for the classic series. Keep the faith: it's going to be massive.

Format PS3 ETA 20 Feb Pub Capcom



2 Killzone 2

Rid the galaxy of the super fugly Helghast then work your way up the ranks in a 32-player online game that features customisable classes. It's set to be PS3's premier sci-fi FPS.

Format PS3 ETA 20 Feb Pub Sony



3 Silent Hill Homecoming

The survival horror series makes its PS3 debut with new hero, ex-soldier Alex. Prepare for more creepy kids and the gentle caress of a zombie dog's jaws.

Format PS3 ETA Feb 2009 Pub Konami



Preview

Classic Series Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub Koei Dev Omega Force

Dynasty Warriors 6 Empires

△ China ◎ In × Your □ Hands



■ Sima Yi

Dynasty Wei
Weapon Eradication Claws

"Hello gorgeous, what's your na... Oh, sorry sir." Gender issues aside, Sima Yi is a devious and cunning strategist whose main rival in *Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires* is the tactical master, Zhuge Liang.



■ Zhen Ji

Dynasty Wei
Weapon Allure Chain Whip

Wife of Cao Pi son of Cao Cao, Zhen Ji is your archetypal ice maiden: beautiful, cold-hearted and impossibly high maintenance. So out of our league.



■ Zhao Yun

Dynasty Shu

Weapon Dragon Spike

One of Liu Bei's lieutenants, Zhao Yun is super brave (or a massive show-off) and often storms enemy lines alone. He once saved Liu Bei's son – a feat that earned him the name 'Little Dragon'.



■ Liu Bei

Dynasty Shu
Weapon Strength And Virtue Swords

Liu is described as 'a man of utmost virtue', which we take to mean he's a bit of a sanctimonious priss. His ambition is to bring peace to the land for his people, apparently by killing everyone else in China.

■ Lu Bu

Dynasty Independent
Weapon Maelstrom

Rocking this season's 'madman' look, Lu is rarely seen in battle without his snorting nag Red Hare, and wields a huge glaive for 360° of lethality. He's out to prove his power is limitless, and it may not be an idle boast.



■ Zhang Fei

Dynasty Shu
Weapon Serpent Blade

Hard-drinking Zhang Fei is said to have the strength of 10,000 men, which, incidentally, is the number of generic foot soldiers you have to knock in the average *Dynasty Warriors* level. Certainly feels that way.

■ Dong Zhuo

Dynasty Independent
Weapon Wizard Club

Slave to a terrible greed for power and [from the looks of things] pork buns, Dong wants to create his idea of paradise on Earth. Favourite diversion in battle? Asking opponents to 'see what's under the dragon's tongue'.



■ Cao Cao

Dynasty Wei
Weapon Sword Of Heaven

Lurking under his sullen exterior, the King of Wei Cao is a keen gardener. Sorry, that should have read 'despotic ruler whose terrified officers will do anything, however cruel, to secure victory over all China for him'.

The hook It's hack 'n' slash meets Risk

Empires integrates a tactical element with DW's button-mashing combat. Having chosen a dynasty, territory, and officers, the slashing becomes a means to seize land and expand your empire. New for DW6E are strategic character cards that can be played to influence battle, Subordinate, Officer and Lord ranks and surprise attacks.



Pick a battlefield to expand your empire.



Slay hordes of enemies to win the territory.



Fight off the bosses who challenge your rule.



Did you know?

The entire Dynasty Warriors series is based 'loosely' on the Romance Of The Three Kingdoms - a 14th Century historical novel written by Luo Guanzhong that covers the years between 169 and 280 that saw the Shu, Wei and Wu dynasties struggling for control of China. In the end, the country was unified as the Jin Dynasty by Sima Yan, the grandson of Sima Yi (far left, top), so play as him if you want to back the winner.



Preview



PS3 Exclusive Format PS3 ETA 20 February Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla

Cast list



The hero

Thomas Sevchenko
Your character, Sev, is the key man in Alpha Squad and all-round handsome dan.



The veteran

Rico Velasquez
Killzone 1's big lad returns as Alpha Squad leader. Shoots a lot.



The boss

Jan Templar
The hero from the original game, Templar is Alpha Squad's off-field commander

Killzone 2

△ Good ◎ Looks ✘ Big □ Guns

If Killzone was a man, it would be a handsome murderer – smart hair, shiny teeth, long overcoat concealing not a knife or a gun, but a lead pipe. THUMP. That's how he'd do his business. Because Killzone is brilliantly, outrageously good-looking, but also subtle like a brick to the back of the head. And we're beginning to think that's no bad thing.

The sweet truth is that Killzone 2 is shaping up to be the most visually sophisticated thing on PS3, with its deft mix of motion blur, fizzing lighting and complicated post-processing effects that we can't pretend to truly understand, combining to make a grim but gorgeous shadowplay of the game's bold, chunky character models. Which, by the way, are pitched spot on, not as preposterously pumped-up as Gears Of War's He-Man meatheads, but pleasingly solid and round lumps of soldier.

Still, at first that seemed like it might be a problem – the whole thing threatened to be too weighty. Our sense from earlier previews was that we wanted it to move faster, for the bulky Helghast space fascists to get dead quicker and to fall down with fewer bullets. Now we've played quite a bit further (through four levels we're allowed to talk about, and two that we're not) and we've acclimatised.

Girth mother

The trick is to embrace the big-fisted physicality. You're driving a tank here (sometimes literally), not a sports car – get used to moving slower and taking more damage. The game isn't about running and gunning, it's about slamming into cover and fighting splattering mini-wars of attrition with dug-in enemies. The ruined concrete scenery offers tons of variations on the theme – two sides of a semi-collapsed

courtyard erupting with machine gun fire, volleys of bullets from opposing sides of a crumbling street. There are big set-pieces, too – bringing down a lightning-belching arc tower, defending Visari Square from swarms of troopers spilling from the surrounding tower blocks – and they come off spectacularly, but the nuts and bolts is built on heavy armour and even heavier bullets.

There are still a couple of niggles. Aside from the M82 assault rifle all the weapons have First World War-era iron sights rather than sexy laser dot – this is the future, people! – and a headshot should always mean instant death, rather than your stormtrooper helmet simply popping off to reveal your bleached bald skull. But for the main part we're convinced this has plenty of substance to go with its astonishing looks – find out for sure next month in our exclusive review.



Can't Wait To Play...



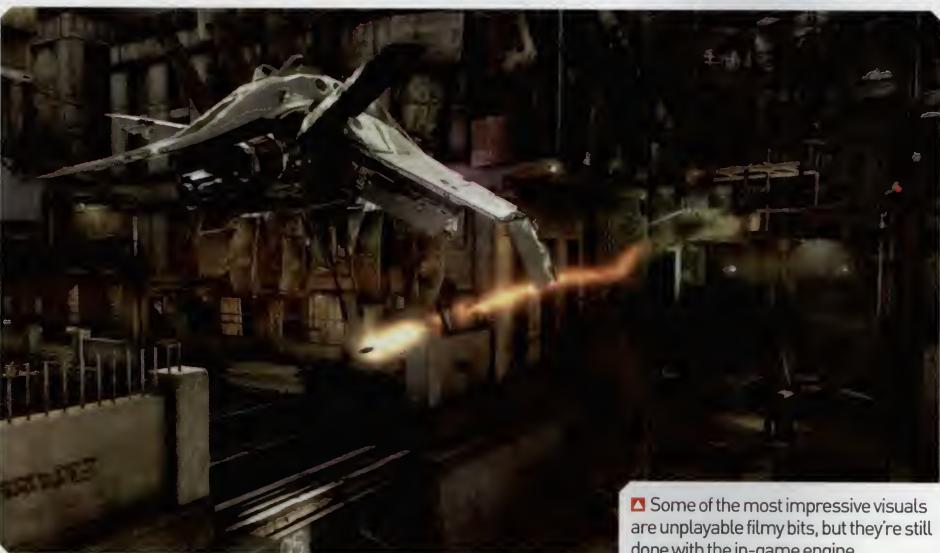
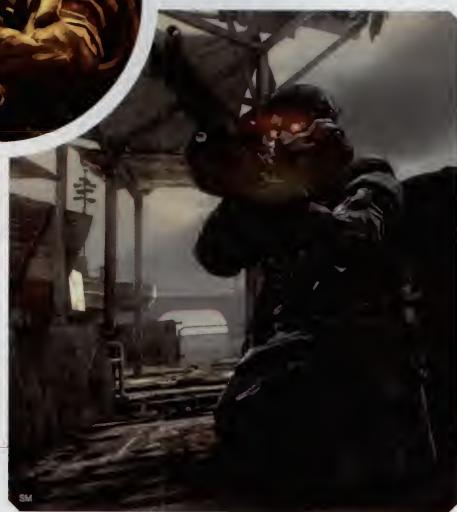
► In certain places you can overhear bits of throaty Helghast grunt chatter... before you fill them up with metal.



► Wish you were here! Planet Helghast is a super-grim setting.



► These cloaky sods are Helghast snipers – easy to put down with a quick melee thwack if you get up close, but also deadly if you don't track them down soon enough.



► Some of the most impressive visuals are unplayable filmy bits, but they're still done with the in-game engine.

Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves
Ben Mattes
Producer, Prince Of Persia

Resident Evil 5



"Resi 4 set the bar very high for 'redefining themselves'. The enhanced controls will definitely improve the experience and with the new co-op mode I'll be able to share the thrill of the non-stop survival action with a friend and probably be scared to death all over again."



Uncharted 2

"This is high on my wish list. Uncharted was a perfect example of a game that I felt was so much more than the sum of its parts. It defined the next generation, not just because of beautiful graphics or gameplay, but because every element of the game was refined, from animation, to acting, to music, to story."

Mirror's Edge

"As you may be able to tell from Prince Of Persia, we like taking risks on our team, so we feel a sort of kinship with the folks at DICE for the extremely gutsy move they're making with this. Mirror's Edge's fluid movement gives it a unique gameplay mechanic."



Preview



A Mig-29 Fulcrum is good for close combat. The Soviet designed SU-27 Flanker.



The ERS will alert you to enemy lock-ons.



Hold **X** when firing for a missile's-eye view.



Dodge attacks with stylish acrobatics.



Every plane is obsessively realistic...



...but their weaponry has been increased.



Most jets carry three types of missile.



The F16, also known as the Fighting Falcon.



Direct your wingmen with the D-pad.



The E69m Eurofighter Typhoon.



Move the camera to see who's on your tail.



A-10 Thunderbolt – ace for ground attacks.



Light attack Harrier GR7 jump jet.

Quick pitch

Online dogfights

Play four-man co-op or skirmish in eight-man deathmatches, with access to support units such as radar jammers.

I-spy

High quality satellite images add a photorealistic look to the ground as you're crashing towards it.

Old friends

Scott Mitchell from Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter has a cameo.

Can't wait?
Play these



Ace Combat X: Skies Of Deception
(PSP, Sony)

Head up a squadron of fighter pilots and manoeuvre your way through a fictional war.



Blazing Angels: Squadrons Of WWII
(PS3, Ubisoft)

Retro dogfighting. Fly Spitfires, B17s and other WW2 kites.

Tom Clancy's HAWX

Ⓐ Wing ⓒ And ⓓ A ⓔ Prayer

Playing Tom Clancy's Hawx is the closest you're going to get to actually being inside a Eurofighter Typhoon without scouring adultfriendfinder.com for lonely RAF pilots. Set in a recognisable 2015, you start as a pilot for a private military company called Artemis, but end up fighting against them when they attack the USA. Cue the blue skies and precision bombs as you take on missions ranging from simple escorts to sneak attacks.

It's billed as a flight sim, but our first time in the Typhoon proved it was light on the technical stuff and heavy on the fist-pumping. In our first mission, codenamed Adder, we had to protect an oil refinery in the desert. Sounds simple, but it was

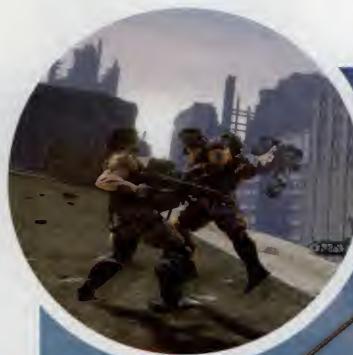
intense and frantic, with attack helicopters above, tanks on the ground and commanders roaring orders into the cockpit. On top of that we had to learn to manoeuvre our craft, which at first felt like trying to wrestle a greasy kestrel. More than once gravity defeated us before the enemy even had a look in. And that was just the tutorial.

Another mission involved trying to defend Washington DC, taking out enemy planes with our missiles and directing our wingmen to attack bogeys or watch our tails, all while keeping one eye on Air Force One. Combat isn't the only answer though – sometimes your only choice is to go in softly. In the fiercely unforgiving Stiletto mission we had to eliminate enemy radar beacons but soon

learned that instead of going in with heavy firepower, we had to perform fancy flying to dodge detection.

Top guns

There are 50 different planes available, from the F-22 Raptor to the Rafale C, but what matters is they're all loaded with missiles, cannons and noob-proof gadgets. The Enhanced Reality System (ERS) gives you anti-crash systems, battle information and a tactical map so you can get an instant overview of the whole battlefield. It's the difference between impressing the girls with your aerial acrobatics and making a really expensive crater. It doesn't make life too easy, but it does make it more fun. Hawx is out early next year. Pack a parachute.



Before you grapple an enemy, make sure you can win the resulting tug of death.

Classic Series Format PS3 ETA 9 February Pub Capcom Dev Grin

Bionic Commando

△ You ○ And ✕ Whose □ Arm?

Initially, playing this merely underlines just how cleverly Mirror's Edge implements its unique take on skyscraper hopscotch. Unlike that game's clear, unobtrusive signposting, Bionic Commando's nuked metropolis feels both visually fussy and overly linear, with fatal pockets of radiation cruelly restricting hero Nathan Spencer's Spider-Man-like swinging to thin canyons of mission relevance. Having resurrected an arcade icon, it feels like Capcom has baulked at the unfettered freedom Spencer's Swiss Army limb potentially gives him to explore the impressive-looking wasteland.

It's a pity because once you begin to trust the arm's grappling hook as you plummet, and take ever greater leaps of faith, you can begin to see how

exhilarating chaining those swooping arcs together can be.

Out on a limb

In theory it's as simple as pressing ✕ to leap, identifying a grapple point – your crosshairs glow blue if you're good to go – and holding □ to attach and swing. To propel Spencer forward, a prompt flashes up as you reach the optimal point of the swing, whereupon you release □ and repeat the process. Alternatively, you can grapple a wall and scale it by holding □ and hoisting Spencer up with ✕. It's an effective system but takes some getting used to. A fact that makes the developer's decision to deny you the freedom to simply explore the city and your new-found powers at your leisure all the more baffling.

Dev talk



"People say they want originality, but what they really want is what they're used to, with a little sprinkle of originality on top. 'Cause we like what we're comfortable with."

Ben Judd
Producer, Capcom



Combat makes nice use of weapons and Nathan Spencer's bionic grappling hook.

Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

▲ New Year, new games

Uncharted 2, Resi 5, Heavy Rain, inFamous... and of course whatever Team Ico comes up with next. Shame we'll all be stony broke.

▲ Oh, now you like it

Killzone Beta gets underway. Internet collectively notices it's a bit good. OPM nods paternally.



▲ Fight > work

Mag almost collapses as Street Fighter IV and Turbo HD arrive in the space of a week. "Yes, that page will write itself. Ryu says so..."



049

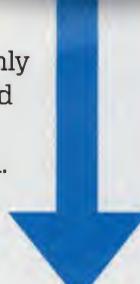
▼ Dead dog

"Ooh, he's so cute, can I stroke... Nope, too late, he's dead." As sidekicks go, we can only hope that Resi 5's Sheva proves less suicidal than Fallout 3's Dogmeat.



▼ Left behind

Okay Valve, we get it: *you hate us*. It's the only sane reason that you'd refuse to do a PS3 version of Left 4 Dead. Fine, but you just missed out on a Christmas card.



▼ Your free time

Careers, love lives and basic hygiene sacrificed to the tottering pile of games that stupid Santa has delivered.



Preview

Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA Summer 2009 Pub THQ Dev Yuke's

UFC 2009 Undisputed

Ⓐ Fists ⓒ Knees Ⓝ Slams Ⓞ Chokes

Boxing? Meh. In boxing, bouts end in two ways: knockout punch or decision. In the UFC, the last 12 months have seen fights ended by flying knee, armlock, head kick, 'heelhook', choke, and – most memorably – a fighter breaking his opponent's ribs and knocking himself spark out during a slam.

This is both good and bad for the UFC game. Good because it's the most unpredictable competition in the world: anything can happen. Bad for the same reason. How are you going to translate that onto two sticks and a dozen buttons? "It's a challenge," admits producer William Schmitt. "Grappling presents unique problems." Many of the developers have taken up Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, a martial art practised by all UFC fighters, in order to better understand the sport's intricacies. And it shows: not only are the fighters' entrances and idiosyncrasies right, but the striking, submissions and reversals all flow together smoothly. How it'll play is still anyone's guess – only UFC president Dana White and Yuke's themselves have held the controllers so far – but if they get the double-knockout slam in there we'll give it bonus marks.



Close-up

Four-ounce gloves mean KOs are frequent. In the game, they'll be determined by whether you're moving towards or away from a punch, and how hard your opponent is swinging.

Heavy hitters How the UFC comes to life on PS3



Heavyweight contenders like Quinton 'Rampage' Jackson and Frank Mir are confirmed.



There's also plenty of detail in the non-combatants – revered cutman Jacob 'Stitch' Duran appears alongside professional Octagon-pixie Arianny Celeste.

Quick pitch

Big boys

The roster is more than 70-strong, and includes every weight division's champ – including ex-WWE monster Brock Lesnar.

Moving on up

Career mode lets you create a fighter and go from rookie to main eventer.

Octagon online

Use the net to pound other players, or add new fighters as DLC.

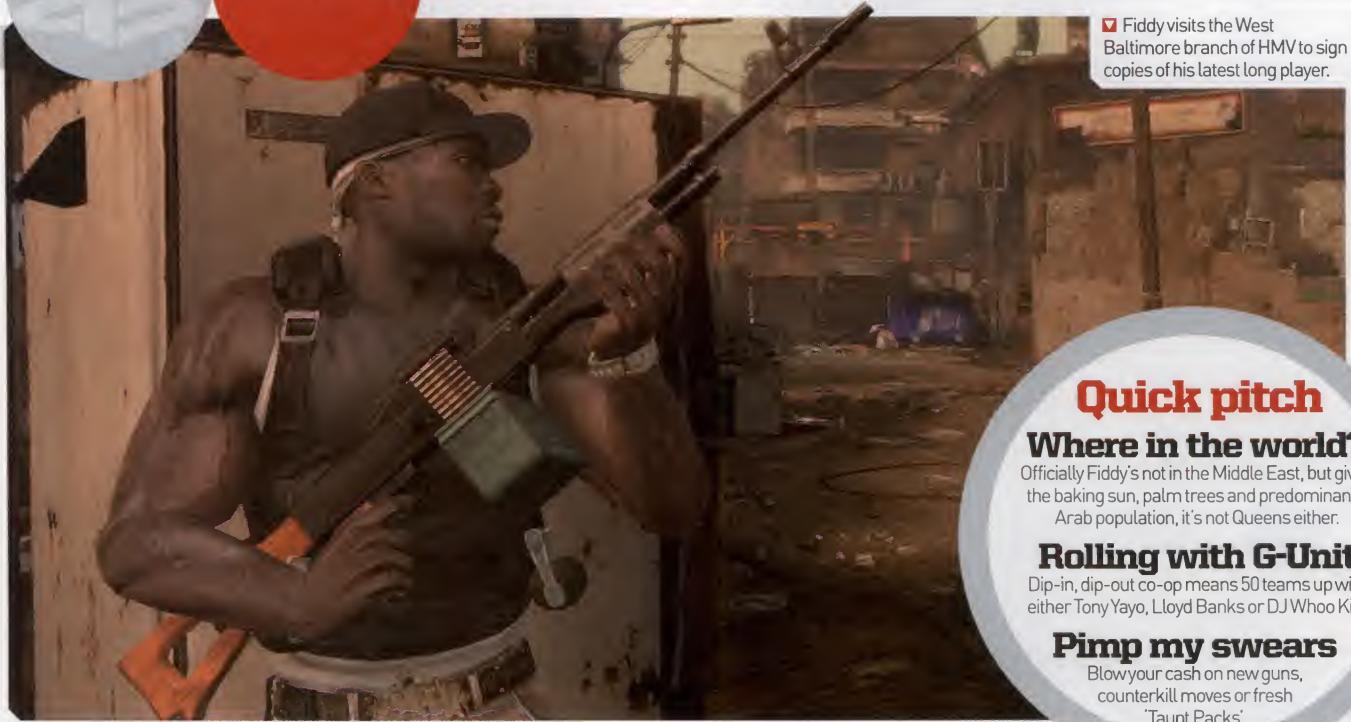
Did you know?

The quickest ever KO happened at UFC Fight Night 13 – James Irvin banged out Houston Alexander in a mere eight seconds. Headbutting, hair pulling and groin shots only became illegal at UFC 14 – Joe Son took more than a dozen punches to the sweetbreads in UFC 4. The first two UFC tournaments included a sumo wrestler and a ninja. Neither made it to the finals.



Technical knockout

Fighters are all competent at the basics, but they certainly have individual strengths – Frank Mir here isn't too good at swinging the leather, but he's pretty tasty on the ground.



▀ Fiddy visits the West Baltimore branch of HMV to sign copies of his latest long player.

Quick pitch

Where in the world?

Officially Fiddy's not in the Middle East, but given the baking sun, palm trees and predominantly Arab population, it's not Queens either.

Rolling with G-Unit

Dip-in, dip-out co-op means 50 teams up with either Tony Yayo, Lloyd Banks or DJ Whoo Kid.

Pimp my swears

Blow your cash on new guns, counterkill moves or fresh Taunt Packs'.

David Hayes Format PS3 ETA 23 January Pub THQ Dev Swordfish Studios

50 Cent Blood On The Sand

Ⓐ Skull ⓒ And ⓓ Cross ⓔ Homes



Haze, Legendary, Turok, Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty, Quantum Of Solace, Army Of Two, Conflict: Denied Ops – there's no shortage of wantonly average shooters out there – and Blood On The Sand is considerably tighter, pacier and enjoyable than the lot of them. Hey, nobody's more surprised than us...

'G' Three Kings

Key to this implausible, End Days scenario is Swordfish Studios' decision to embrace the madness of the 'Fiddy hits the Middle East' premise and sprint with it into a world of quasi-

genius wrongness and surprisingly solid, duck and cover combat. So the story is barking – organ harvesting! 50 out to recover a diamond-encrusted skull! Tony Yayo knowing the intricacies of military-grade ordnance! – the national and cultural stereotypes positively 1970s in their lack of subtlety, and the dialogue several clicks north of 'salty'.

However, stop



sputtering at the shamelessness of it all – dodge the suicide bombers in their pickups, Fiddy! – and what you find is a breathlessly energetic shooter that never leaves you a moment to question whether you should be having this much fun. The co-op dynamic (online or AI) works well, there are counterkills, crates bursting with cash, hidden goodies, tons of slick bonus tasks and 19 original tracks from Curtis himself. So wrong it's right? Could be.

Star talk



"I had just watched the movie Blood Diamond and I was like, 'Yo, I want it to feel like this'."

50 Cent

Hip hop artist

Counterkills Get rich or die tryin' with Fiddy's melee special moves



Get up close to an enemy and you can press ⓒ to trigger a button-matching hand-to-hand takedown.



While you can't choose a specific counterkill to unleash it is possible to buy ever more complex and punishing finishers from the shop. Current favourite? The Power Of The Tang Hand.

The Latest On...

New shots, new games, new info



The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest

Format PS3 ETA 16 January Pub EA

Our first play of Pandemic's Rings-meets-Battlefront slasher reveals a lack of spark, with the pretty movie sequences dissolving into sluggish, thumb-numbing waves of butchery.



Wanted: Weapons Of Fate

Format PS3 ETA March Pub Warner Bros

It's a quasi-sequel to the movie, with an authentically-modelled James McAvoy (Steady, ladies) bending bullets using an interesting but fiddly analogue stick system. Fun from what we've played so far, but for how long?



Wheelman

Format PS3 ETA 20 February Pub Midway

Steals from Stranglehold (shooting) and Burnout (vehicle physics) and while that marriage may sound weird, it just about works. The surprisingly cool bit: making Vin Diesel leap from one car to another while driving with a tap of (C).



Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection

Format PS3 ETA Spring Pub Sega

40 old-skoolers from the early '90s. Most will be bum, but the fact it includes the mighty Streets Of Rage 1, 2, and 3 has us medium interested... For now.



Burnout Paradise

Format PS3 ETA Spring Pub EA

DLC planned for 2009 includes toy cars, a 'boosts special pack' featuring the Carson Extreme Hotrod – the series' fastest ever car – and a huge, entirely new (paid for) island called Big Surf.



inFamous

Format PS3 ETA May Pub Sony

Game director Nate Fox promises a completely slowdown-free experience, even in dense gang fights, packed with loads of Trophies – which he describes as "like videogame crack".

There's more...

Activision has confirmed that *Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* is on the way next year, along with *Guitar Hero 5*, a *James Bond* racer described as "Mario Kart meets Forza" (!) and a new *Tony Hawk's* outing where "you're not going to be playing this game with a controller in your hands". A skateboard peripheral, then. Sounds equal parts exciting and ominous. It's not just *inFamous* getting Trophies – Sony has confirmed that as of 1 January 2009 all PS3 games will have to support them. Polyphony Digital boss Kazunori Yamauchi says that *Gran Turismo PSP* is still in the works and that *Gran Turismo 5* is "moving forward". The bad news? Neither is likely to turn up before Christmas 2009. 505 Games is to publish a super-serious WW2 flight sim entitled *IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey*, which'll let you fight over Stalingrad, Berlin, Sicily, Korsun, and – Yes! Yes! Yes! – in The Battle Of Britain. Sony has launched a PlayStation credit card in the US that earns reward points to spend on PlayStation and Sony products every time it's used. No word as to if it'll be used in Europe. Because that's what we need right now. More debt.

Watchmen

Format PS3 ETA March Pub Warner Bros

The greatest graphic novel evah is being turned into a movie – and a game. It could be amazing: full of flawed but rounded heroes, the pick of which is Dr Manhattan. He was created in an accident and is now the most powerful superhero of all time – imagine splitting yourself into ten flame-chucking soldiers and then frying everyone in sight. The possibilities are endless... as is the scope for crushing disappointment.



The Watchmen are 'costumed' rather than 'super' heroes, barring one notable exception.

feature

Resident Evil



Root



All



feature

Resident Evil

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
FEATURE

PlayStation
Official Magazine UK

Know this: we love zombies. And to celebrate our latest hands-on with **Resident Evil 5**, we've also got a complete retrospective of the coffin-dodging series...



Resident Evil



A touch of evil

We head for the dark continent to go hands-on with Resident Evil 5



Chris Redfield returns as Resi 5's hero alongside new character Sheva Alomar.

The first level of Resident Evil 5 I play is called The Gathering Place, and it only takes a couple of minutes before those three words take on a terrible significance. Easing Chris Redfield down into a cramped yard enclosing a shack in the game's fictional African shantytown of Kijuju, I walk him into the ramshackle structure, weapon primed. His partner, the fragrant Sheva Alomar, follows with caution. It's empty, but the sudden cacophony coming from the nearby town square suggests any sense of relief is premature.

Edging towards a dust-rimmed window I look outside to see a raised platform surrounded by baying, enraged locals – the whites of their eyes pooling blood. Their deranged gaze is fixed on a small cluster of figures above them. One – a wiry man in mirrored Aviators – stirs up the crowd using a battered megaphone, and while I can't make out the dialect, it doesn't take a linguist to recognise the scene that's about to play out.

Excella Gionne is Resi 5's femme fatale.



Last glimpsed in Resident Evil Code: Veronica X, Albert Wesker returns in full evil mastermind mode.

Before him kneels a man, held in place by two thugs, and begging desperately for his life, while behind him... the form is recognisably human, but the massive proportions of the hooded executioner's body and its mutilation by scores of three-inch nails projecting from his grimy, sweat-slick skin are anything but. Suddenly the ringleader nods, and the executioner raises a massive, chain-wrapped axe, bringing it down to silence the screams with a sickening wet thud.

The crowd roars, and before it even subsides the leader is looking directly at me. A barked command and suddenly the crowd – the whole crowd

is sprinting our way. And behind them lumbers the executioner trailing that obscene axe. If I have ever doubted Capcom's wisdom in hardwiring co-operative play into Resident Evil 5, it evaporates in that instant. Guns at the ready, Sheva and I take up positions as the first window shatters. Man, it's good to be back popping heads.

The cradle of strife

How do you follow a survival horror reinvention whose flawless design, pacing and gameplay made it arguably the best game of *any genre* on PlayStation 2? Here, at last, is Capcom's pragmatic answer to the challenge



posed by Resident Evil 4. You resist the urge to repeat that game's seismic gameplay shift – Resi 4 traded the series shuffling zombies, scarce ammo and vulnerable, drip-fed scares for more mobile 28 Days Later-style infected maniacs, a lot of ammo and quick-time event terror. Instead, you refine the gameplay and transpose it to a new location with even fewer places to hide, ramping up the breathless urgency with drop-in drop-out co-op play forcing you to protect as well as survive. And you

“You’re now forced to protect as well as survive.”

create a story that simultaneously links new Resi with the contemporary fear of terrorism, and the very core of the series – the discovery of the Progenitor Virus, from which every last Resi mutation has writhed and erupted into life.

Naturally, Resi 5's plot is a closely guarded secret but this much we know: Chris Redfield, former Special Tactics And Rescue Service (STARS) officer in the first game is now a member of the Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance, deployed in West Africa alongside local BSAA agent Sheva to investigate a possible (read: definite) biohazard outbreak. It seems that with the collapse of Umbrella – the corporation responsible for the Progenitor Virus and its mutating, zombifying T-Virus spin-off – terrorists worldwide have started acquiring Bio-Organic Weapons (BOWs). Kijuju appears to be a flashpoint for the outbreak that, like the Plagas from Resi 4, takes the form of a parasitic organism that inhabits the host, leaving them murderously psychotic. Behind it all is a new pharmaceutical corporation called Tricell, run by



Environment

This time around your surroundings have more points of interaction, such as powerlines that can be cut to electrocute the Infected. Oh, and check out the faded Umbrella logo on the bottom shack. It'll pay to keep your eyes open at all times...

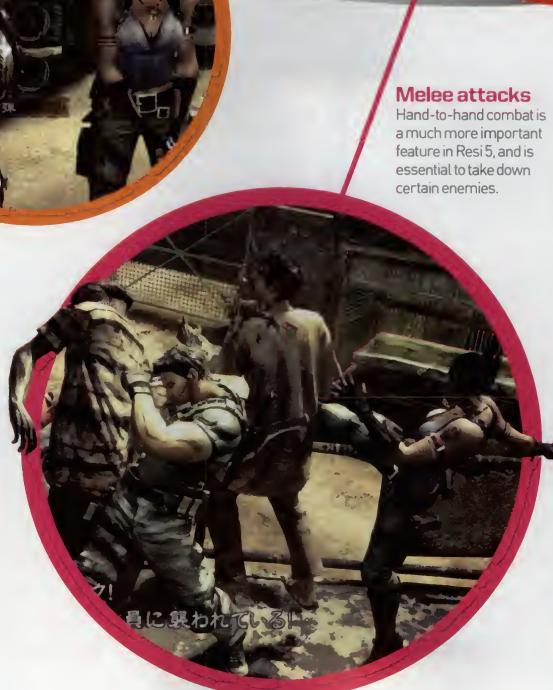
Shooter controls

As well as the classic Resi 4 controls, the new game enables you to opt for a two-stick FPS-style setup.



In the mix

Five new features in Resident Evil 5



Melee attacks

Hand-to-hand combat is a much more important feature in Resi 5, and is essential to take down certain enemies.



Co-op

Resi 5 is built around co-op play. The AI is gratifyingly smart but playing through the story with a mate is the real draw here.



Resi 4's brilliantly frantic Mercenaries mini-game returns.



Resi 5's 'Daddy Chainsaw' is every bit as hardcore as his Resi 4 predecessor.

haughty newcomer, Excella Gionne, who in turn is collaborating with ultimate series villain, and Redfield's former STARS superior, Albert Wesker (typical quote "The right to be God – that right is now mine!"). His return to Resi is a stroke of genius. Having died once already and been resurrected by an experimental virus, he's something more than human. It's a fact that's underlined in the latest trailer where Wesker appears to teleport Nightcrawler-style during a fight with Chris to appear, gun pressed against Redfield's temple. Infinitely cooler than Resi 5's hero, he makes for a formidable opponent.

After that, fact gives way to a tantalising flick book of images. There are the locations – a riverside factory complex, a pristine research facility complete with gigantic, pod-filled chamber housing God knows what, a rain-whipped container ship, and a subterranean temple, intriguingly dotted with abandoned Umbrella logos and equipment. There are also



"Dogs split and bloom like bloody lilies."

terrifying new mutations that include dogs that split and bloom like bloody lilies, flying parasites, scuttling Starship Troopers-style bugs, a gigantic sea beast that makes Resident Evil 4's Del Lago look like a sprat, and a man whose skin boils and erupts into a writhing mass of black, serpentine corruption.

Then there are the new characters, such as a beak-masked and hooded woman, an elderly man who seems to be wearing Wesker's leather coat, and an irritating pipsqueak in a Hawaiian shirt who comes across as a Bronx-accented Ramon Salazar. Unravelling the labyrinthine connections between all

of these will be the meat on Resi 5's shattered bones.

Moving out

Back in the besieged shack in Kijuju, Resi 5's gameplay rapidly gives up its secrets as clusters of the Infected close in on Chris and Sheva, forcing me to get experienced, *fast*. Controls are as Resi 4 – left stick for movement, **△** to enter static aiming mode with **⊗** to fire and the right stick to move crosshairs – but now there's also an alternative setup. It recognises the ubiquity of first-person shooters, offering familiar two-stick controls with the aiming mode pushed to **□** and firing mapped to **△**. Ironically, having sampled both setups at length, it's the eccentric, original scheme that wins



A nutter with a chainsaw and dogs that try and eat you with their necks... Oh Resi, we've missed you.





“Hey, Sheva, pull over. There are some guys waving at us. Maybe the brake light’s out...”

059



out – it simply feels more *Resi* – but it's still good to have the choice.

Capcom's next change actually costs me a life, as I dip into my inventory for some health-replenishing green herbs. Expecting a *Resi* 4-style gameplay pause enabling me to lazily peruse my items from the comfort of an oversized briefcase, I'm shocked to find that the relentless tide of death continues towards me. Before I can process this, I'm swamped and torn

■ This massive, hooded executioner is the first boss you face off against in *Resi* 5.

apart. The pampered gamer in me hates this change initially, but Capcom is right to remove the scoundrel's refuge of the pause-menu inventory. Having restarted I'm immediately more aware of my surroundings, ammo levels and Sheva's proximity. Not only can she revive you but also, if close by, you can request items from her inventory or trade yours. Try and take her last clip ('Your sacrifice will be remembered, Sheva') and she'll



■ This frantic desert sprint sees a convoy of the Infected chasing after Chris and Sheva.



■ With enemies more numerous and murderous than ever, having Sheva as backup is a godsend.



■ It seems that even the glorious African wildlife has fallen prey to the T-Virus and its mutations.



"Resi 5 makes you risk it all up close."

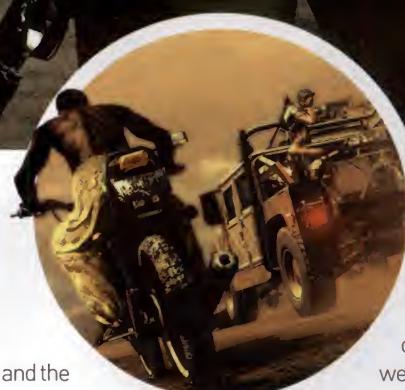
refuse, but in general she won't leave you hanging. Whether this will be true of human compatriots in the game's online co-op or offline split-screen game is a different matter.

Cover me

What is certain is this: playing solo, Sheva's AI has been much improved since our first hands-on, providing efficient back up but not clinging to Chris like a nervous girlfriend at a Slayer gig. With the lumbering executioner's arrival making a rapid exit from the shack a no-brainer, the level unfolds into a frantic fight to hold back the locals long enough for a BSAA chopper to arrive. The dusty

streets of Kijuju look amazing, and the standoff ends five long minutes later with Chris and Sheva back-to-back on the roof of a junked bus. Despite having shrugged off hundreds of rounds and exhausted our supply of grenades, we seem only to have succeeded in making the executioner mad[der]. No doubt this is a classic Resi first encounter – just enough to put the fear of God into you before the main event.

The second level is called Shantytown and takes Chris and Sheva deeper into Kijuju. It also reveals how Resi 5's hardwired co-op gameplay encompasses branching action. Early on, Chris gives Sheva a leg up onto



■ Vehicle sections in the African Savannah should make for amazing set-pieces.

a low roof. She then covers me from the roof as I circle around the building, taking out flying parasites and a tricky Infected with a supply of Molotov cocktails. Later on

we have to split up again ("call me, yeah?") Sheva clearing a building under construction as it fills with the Infected, while I dig in across the road and thin out their numbers with a sniper rifle. Even with Sheva's combat chops it's a tense sequence. There's no grieving and moving on – if she dies, we both fail.

Reunited, we begin to move towards a gated house when the unmistakable sound of a chainsaw firing up fills my ears. If you've played Resident Evil 4 you'll remember the hated Dr Salvador – his potato sack headgear and one-hit kills earned him an instant place in the PlayStation Hall Of Villainy. His West African cousin is, if anything, worse – with a solitary bulging, baleful eye staring from his Hessian mask.

Sack trick

Retreating and targeting oil barrels along the route helps to slow him – Resi 5's environments are much more interactive than in previous games – but it's not until I cotton on to the increased importance of



■ Hardwiring the game for co-op may sound like it dilutes the horror, but trust us, you'll still get the fear.

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
PlayStation®
Official Magazine • UK



► We've seen a lot of the dusty town of Kijuju up until now, but there are plenty of other locations coming.



► Shoot grenade-lobbing enemies before they have a chance to throw their fizzing explosives.

melee strikes that I manage to take him down. With the boss dazed by an oil-drum detonation I surge forward and trigger a rib-cracking kick with a smile. Just when all you want to do is stay back, Resi 5 makes you risk it all up close. As his death rattle fades the game delivers its punch line by revealing the beast's name: 'Guard'. 'Guard'? My nerves are jangling all over the place, my palms are hot and slick, and this homicidal abomination wasn't even a boss.

Some diehards will likely bemoan the move to co-op and sun-baked horror as a fresh slap in the face – Capcom comprehensively rejecting Resi's 'lone hero versus shuffling zombies' vibe. But playing Resi 5 it's abundantly clear that this is where the series' heart and head now lie. With the increase in firepower, allies and abilities comes a commensurate hike in numbers, types and unremitting savagery of the enemy. In this way

Resi keeps its balance, nurturing the oppressive sense of vulnerability that has been a cornerstone of the game from the beginning. In the post-9/11 world, horror doesn't just lurk in the shadows anymore, but can strike suddenly and terribly, eclipsing the sun and putting a chill in the brightest day. In this respect, Resident Evil 5 is a very modern survival horror game and could well mark a new high point for iconic PlayStation series when it's released next spring. For now though, turn the page to begin our comprehensive history of all things Evil. And remember: no bogarding the red herbs...

Architect of Evil

We talk to Jun Takeuchi, chief producer on Resident Evil 5



What made you pick Chris Redfield as a returning character over any other famous faces you could have chosen?

We wanted to tie up a number of plot lines from the Resident Evil series that were unresolved. These plot lines revolved around Chris so it was obvious that he would be the main focus of Resi 5. Simply put, you could say that Resi 5 is Chris' story.

How does Resi 5 evolve the series?

The introduction of online co-op play is a major leap for the Resident Evil series and adds a new dimension to the way players will approach the game. There are also a number of other innovations for the series, such as providing players with the option of the new control scheme which will expand on and improve the gameplay experience.

Were you worried that co-op would dilute the fear of facing danger alone?

Not at all. In fact, it creates more tension as you have to continually think about your partner – the state of their health, how much ammunition and items they have and, just as importantly, if they are watching your back.

What scares you?

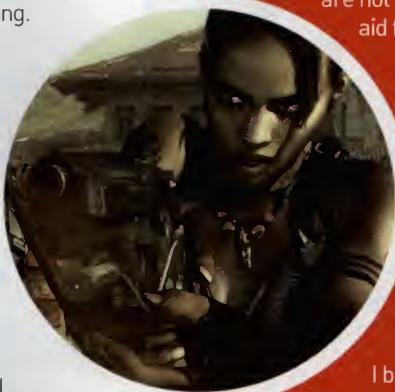
Deadlines! I'm living a fear-stricken life now by looking at the master submission deadline.

If you became infected and could choose a mutation, what would it be?

I would like to fly. I don't want to be an insect though...

So you're infected and must eat people to survive – which famous person would you eat first?

My sense of justice dictates me to eat the ones that are bullying the regular people. However, these people are not very appetising so I would need some aid for my digestion.



What is the one thing you'd like readers of our mag to know about the game?

Videogaming is a new form of entertainment and we need to believe in its endless possibility.

Where does PS3's Cell make its power felt most for you – in the graphics or what you can do with the gameplay?

I believe that the power of PS3 is in its balance. Therefore, as a developer we need to utilise both the Cell processing power and the huge capacity and fast speed of Blu-ray.

Sum up Resi 5 in four words.

Fear you can't forget.

Resident Evil timeline

Blood lines and family ties – the whole story

Ever since it unleashed the original Resident Evil, Capcom has been fleshing out the saga of the T-Virus with enough absurd twists and pantomime villains to make *Prison Break* look like gritty docudrama. We've pieced together information left in diaries, memos and files by those involved in the creation of the virus and the victims of its mutagenic effects to create a timeline of all the important events in the Resiverse. We've only included games and events that are considered canon, though. So that means no *Outbreak* and just two of the *Survivor* outings.

Central to the whole story is the Umbrella Corporation, established by Edward Ashford, Ozwell Spencer and James Marcus in 1968 to fund their research into the Progenitor Virus. Over the subsequent 30 years the trio's experiments were well-kept secrets. That is, until the T-Virus outbreak in Raccoon City in 1998 blew the lid off their nightmarish research into bio-weapons. As the Umbrella empire crumbled, other organisations have appeared to fill the void, providing a constant stream of viral horror. So here's to 48 years of zombies, and counting...

After losing contact with the STARS Bravo team, the Alpha team – Albert Wesker, Barry Burton, Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine – find Bravo team's downed chopper. They're attacked by a pack of MA-39 Cerberus (zombie dogs) and flee into the Spencer mansion. Valentine and Burton find three Bravo team members zombified, pecked and poisoned respectively. Chris finds Rebecca Chambers alive, well and cute. Jill and Chris also learn that a member of their own team is a traitor. Suspicion falls on Burton due to Wesker holding his family hostage to guarantee his compliance. When he's revealed as the Umbrella agent, Wesker releases a Tyrant, only to be killed by his own creation. However, he has actually injected himself with an unknown virus to fake his death. Jill defeats the Tyrant and along with the surviving STARS members heads to Raccoon City.



24-25 Jul 1998

Chris becomes increasingly frustrated at the lack of action by Raccoon Police Chief Brian Irons despite the Spencer mansion incident and the growing number of T-Virus victims. Chris eventually leaves the city to infiltrate Umbrella's European headquarters.

Umbrella sends in a team lead by agent Hunk to infiltrate William Birkin's lab and retrieve a sample of the G-Virus. Birkin is fatally wounded but injects himself with G-Virus, mutates, and slaughters Hunk's team as they escape via the sewers. Shattered vials of the T-Virus infect rats, starting the Raccoon City outbreak.

Jul - Aug 1998

22 Sep 1998

Fellow BSAA agent Chris Redfield lands in West Africa to investigate a viral outbreak. There he joins forces with local BSAA operative, Sheva Alomar, to face a new threat.



Jill Valentine apparently dies in the service of the Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance (BSAA), the organisation dedicated to stopping deliberate viral outbreaks.

2008

23 Jul 1998



The Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UBCS) enters Raccoon City. Jill Valentine is informed by Brad Vickers that Umbrella has released a Nemesis bio-weapon into the city with the express aim of killing STARS members. After escaping from the mutant assassin Jill meets a unit of UBCS including Carlos Oliveira with whom she works with to find a means of escape. Making their way to the Raccoon Clock Tower, Jill signals for a chopper only for Nemesis to shoot it down. In the ensuing battle Jill is infected by the T-Virus and blacks out. Carlos carries her to safety.

28 Sep 1998



Bio terrorist Curtis Miller releases the T-Virus in a US airport. Fortunately battle-hardened biohazard vets Leon Kennedy and Claire Redfield 'just happen' to be present to handle the situation. Check out page 16 to learn more about the new CGI movie *Resident Evil Degeneration*.

2005

22 Jul 1998



US Government Agent Leon Kennedy's search for Ashley Graham, the US President's missing daughter, takes him to rural Spain where he discovers villagers infected by mind-controlling parasites known as Las Plagas. Cult leader Osmund Saddler is responsible and has designs on global domination. Leon manages to rescue Ashley and escape with the help of Ada Wong, who continues to work for Wesker, locating virus samples. She delivers a fake sample of Las Plagas to him suggesting she is operating as a double agent.

2004



Claire Redfield arrives in Raccoon City to look for her brother Chris. Just as rookie cop Leon Kennedy arrives for his first day on the force, Claire finds William Birkin's daughter Sherry abandoned, and learns that an improved Tyrant is on the loose. Leon meets Ada Wong, claiming to be looking for her boyfriend. Leon and Claire converge on Birkin's lab, discovering the Tyrant is after a sample of G-Virus in Sherry's pendant. They fight a mutated Birkin, killing him.

29 Sep 1998



Start

Edward Ashford and Ozwell E Spencer discover a mutagenic virus which they name the Progenitor Virus. James Marcus begins work on how to enhance it to create biological weapons.

Spencer commissions architect George Trevor to build a mansion for him in the remote Arklay Mountains.



1960



STARS Bravo team is sent out to investigate a series of grisly cannibalistic murders in the Arklay Mountains. Their helicopter is forced to crash land and the team comes under attack from zombies. Young medic Rebecca Chambers meets military prisoner Billy Coen who's on the run after his prison van was attacked by the undead. Forming an alliance they make their way to the Arklay Research Facility to discover James Marcus, reanimated by his own mutant leeches.

1962

The Raccoon Times reports an unusual killing in the Arklay Mountains.

27 May 1998

End?



Resident Evil
(PlayStation, 1996)



Resident Evil 2
(PlayStation, 1998)



Resident Evil 3:
Nemesis
(PlayStation, 1999)



Resident Evil
Survivor
(PlayStation, 2000)



Resident Evil
Code: Veronica
(PlayStation, 2000)



Resident Evil
Zero
(Dreamcast, PS2, 2002)



Resident Evil
Dead Aim
(GameCube, PS2, 2003)



Resident Evil 4
(GameCube, PS2, 2005)



Resident Evil:
The Umbrella
Chronicles
(Wii, 2007)



Resident Evil 5
(PlayStation 3, 2009)

A year after the mansion is complete, George Trevor visits Spencer in his new residence. Unbeknownst to Trevor, his wife Jessica and daughter Lisa, who'd travelled ahead, have been used as viral test subjects by Spencer. Jessica shows no reaction to the Type A virus. Lisa, however, reacts violently to a Type B strain, mutates rapidly and goes insane, ripping her mother's face off, believing her to be an impostor. Trevor is imprisoned and dies within the mansion's walls, eventually becoming a Crimson Head – an evolved strain of zombie with long nails.



Umbrella

The Umbrella Corporation is created by Spencer to act as a front for his research. Ashford, who wants to use the virus for good, is accidentally infected by his son Alexander and dies. Alexander inherits the estate.

Alexander Ashford begins work on his own research facility in the Antarctic. Much later this becomes a part of the ever-expanding Umbrella Corporation.



Alexander Ashford researches genetically enhanced intelligence, cloning two 'children' from the DNA of great, great grandmother Veronica Ashford: Alfred (normal intelligence) and Alexia (super genius). Albert Wesker and William Birkin start at the Umbrella training academy. James Marcus combines leech DNA with the Progenitor Virus to create the Tyrant or T-Virus. He's frustrated that he can only use animals for testing. Birkin begins experiments using the newly found Ebola virus.



1967

Barry Burton and Chris Redfield join the new STARS (Special Tactics And Rescue) police task force founded by Albert Wesker in 1996. Soldier Billy Coen is arrested and sentenced to death after a botched US Army operation overseas ends in the massacre of 23 innocent African villagers.



The Nemesis Project begins, attempting to combine a NE-Alpha parasite with a Tyrant.

Acting on Spencer's orders, Birkin and Wesker assassinate James Marcus, dump his body and assume the roles of lead researchers working on creating a Tyrant – an intelligent T-Virus monster. Unfortunately only one in ten million people has the correct genetic code for 'successful' infection, severely limiting progress. They inject Lisa Trevor with the NE-Alpha or Nemesis parasite, an off-shoot of the T-Virus. She absorbs it and generates the first strain of Gene or G-Virus.

1969

Alfred Ashford learns that he and his sister were 'born' from their father's experiments. In retaliation they use him as a guinea pig for Alexia's T-Veronica virus, created by crossing the Progenitor virus with an older strain found in queen ants. Alexander mutates into a creature called Nosferatu and is imprisoned under the Arctic research facility. Alexia discovers that a lengthy, low temperature gestation period enables a viral host to mutate without losing higher brain functions. She infects herself and enters cryo-stasis for fifteen years.



1971

The first T-Virus zombies are created while Birkin fuses reptilian DNA with a T-Virus-infected human embryo to create the first Hunter. Alexia Ashford becomes the senior researcher at Umbrella's Rockfort Training Facility. She's ten years old.



1977

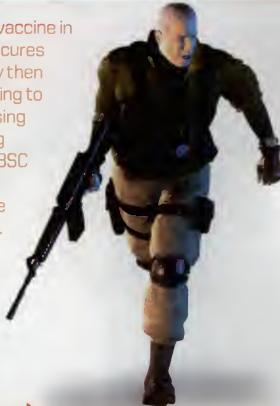
1997

Claire discovers her brother has headed to Europe and sets out to find him. Leon strikes a deal with US government to ensure Sherry's safety, but she still falls into Wesker's hands. Hunk escapes Raccoon City with a sample of G-Virus, as does Ada Wong who delivers it to Wesker, now working for one of Umbrella's rivals.

1991

Carlos manages to discover a vaccine in the Raccoon City Hospital and cures Jill of her T-Virus infection. They then discover the government is going to nuke Raccoon City. More pressing matters include the rampaging Nemesis and Carlos' sinister UBSC teammate Nicholai Givnaef, who has been investigating the T-Virus cure known as Daylight. After dispensing of both with a rail gun and rocket launcher respectively, Jill and Carlos are rescued by Barry Burton in a chopper as the nuclear strike incinerates the city.

1988



1983

Anti Umbrella agent Ark Thompson loses his memory in a helicopter crash on Sheena Island. While trying to find out who he is he discovers and destroys an Umbrella research centre specialising in Tyrant development under the supervision of Vincent Goldman.



1981

Claire Redfield, still searching for the whereabouts of her missing brother Chris, attempts to infiltrate the Umbrella HQ in Paris. She's rumbled by security, though, captured and sent to Umbrella's prison facility located on Rockfort Island.



30 Sep 1998

1 Oct 1998

Chris and Jill, and Albert Wesker launch separate assaults on Sergei Vladimir's Tyrant research centre in Russia. The destruction of Umbrella's last stronghold sees the beginning of the end for the evil corporation, but while Redfield and Valentine rejoice Wesker is the real winner as he's stolen Umbrella's extensive bio-weapon database and intends to resurrect Umbrella with himself as its CEO.



Ex-Umbrella researcher Morpheus D Duvall attacks the Spencer Rain cruise ship, threatening to launch T-Virus warheads at US soil. US Stratcom agent Bruce McGiven is sent to bring Duvall down, who then injects himself with the experimental T-G Virus. At first there are no signs of infection but as McGiven blasts Duvall, rapid mutation causes him to explode.

2003

2002

Wesker attacks Rockfort Island and in the process starts a T-Virus outbreak. Claire escapes her cell and meets fellow prisoner Steve Burnside. Alfred Ashford blames Claire for the attack, releasing a Tyrant to destroy her before escaping to the Antarctic to reanimate his sister Alexia, whose 15 years of cryo-stasis are up. Claire and Steve follow him and discover Alexia's T-Veronica experiment has turned her into a powerful but mentally stable mutant. Chris Redfield turns up, helping to defeat Alexia while Steve is infected by the T-Veronica virus, dies and has his corpse swiped by a now super-human Wesker.

Dec 1998



Heroes and villains

Meet the good, the bad and the savagely-murdered-by-reanimated-corpse who make up Resident Evil's cast

■ Ashley Graham

Impossibly perky jailbait who's kidnapped in a plan to use her as the host for a Las Plagas parasite, with the ultimate aim that she'll take it to her dad, the US Prez. Rescued by Leon Kennedy who, fearing a midnight visit by the FBI, rebuffs her advances during their escape.



■ Chris Redfield

Ex-USAFA member Chris joined the Raccoon City Police as part of the STARS task force. After the events of the original Resi, Chris led the fight against Umbrella, travelling the globe to destroy its bio-weapons. Currently in Africa as a member of the Bioterrorism Security Assessment Alliance.



■ Leon Kennedy

His first day with the Raccoon City Police coincided with the original outbreak of the zombifying T and G viruses. Six years on he's sent to rescue the President's daughter, Ashley, from a group of an evil religious cult and a new threat, the Las Plagas parasite. Worst. CV. Ever.



■ Barry Burton

Ex-Air Force buddy of Chris Redfield, Burton was part of the same STARS team in Resident Evil. With Wesker holding his family hostage, Burton almost betrays Jill Valentine and Redfield, but mans up and becomes a key figure in the anti-Umbrella movement. Wife still furious.



■ Steve Burnside (dead)

Whiny son of an Umbrella staffer who helps Claire Redfield beat the corporation in Code Veronica. After killing his zombified dad he's mutated by the T-Veronica virus and tries to kill her. His humanity prompts him to save her but he dies in the process. Wesker kept the remains. Mwa ha!

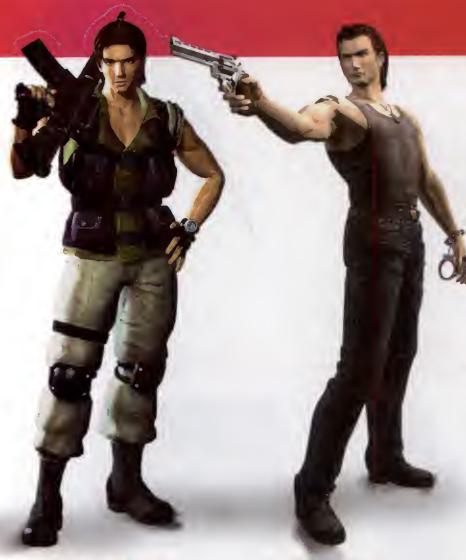


■ Brad Vickers

As the STARS Alpha team chopper pilot who abandons his squad in the middle of a forest at the start of Resident Evil, Brad is arguably responsible for most of the good guys' troubles. Happily, payback comes when, having returned in Resi 3, he's killed messily by Nemesis. Good.



GOOD



■ Claire Redfield

The only Resi hero not to have formal combat training (apart from a few tricks her brother taught her). Despite this, Claire escaped Raccoon City at the height of Resident Evil 2's outbreak, developing a hatred for Umbrella and taking the fight to them in the US and Antarctica while searching for her missing brother.

■ Jill Valentine (dead?)

Part of Resident Evil's original STARS team betrayed by Wesker in Spencer Mansion. She was then targeted by the STARS-snuffing Nemesis during the Raccoon City outbreak in Resi 3. Survived, but the latest Resi 5 trailer shows her tombstone with the dates 1974-2006. But is she really gone? *Really?*

■ Rebecca Chambers

Implausibly 18-year-old medic for the STARS Bravo team (did she start medical training at 11?) and the only Bravo member to survive Resident Evil. Her other claim to zombie fame is that she meets and defeats T-Virus creator James Marcus with the help of Billy Coen in series prequel Resident Evil Zero.

■ Carlos Oliveira

A South American merc who's part of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UNBC) ordered to Raccoon City in a bid to control the T-Virus outbreak. Despite working for the enemy he joins up with Jill Valentine, escapes the city, and becomes part of the anti-Umbrella movement with Redfield and Burton.

■ Billy Coen

A former soldier convicted of killing 23 civilians (23), Coen becomes an unlikely ally of Rebecca Chambers as they both struggle to stay alive in the Arklay Research Facility in Resi Evil Zero. While still guilty as all hell, he's allowed to walk free at the end of Resi Zero as Chambers foolishly seeks refuge in the Spencer Mansion.

■ Luis Sera (dead)

A native of Resi 4's cursed village and an impossibly smouldering scientist who originally assisted Saddler with his research into the Las Plagas parasite before teaming up with Leon. Redemeers himself as the inventor of the parasite-removing machine that saves Leon, but is killed by Saddler.

Hunk

An Umbrella operative sent into the Raccoon City outbreak to retrieve a sample of the G-Virus. By shooting up William Birkin's lab his team was indirectly responsible for the city-wide T-Virus outbreak in Resident Evil 2. Cheers, Hunk. Certainly explain his nickname, 'Mr Death'.



Nicholai Ginovaef (dead)

Russian member of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service who callously records combat data during Resi 3 as his fellow mercs fight the mutations roaming Raccoon City. He's also implicated in both Resident Evil Outbreak and Survivor. Gets chewed up by



Alfred Ashford (dead)

Cloned grandson of Umbrella founder Edward Ashford, twin of Alexia and a certifiable, cross-dressing nutjob who poses as sis while she's away. When he finds out that he's one of his father's experiments (and a borked one at that) he goes mad(er). Eventually killed by Steve Burnside.



Sergel Vladimir (dead)

An ex-Soviet soldier who became an Umbrella executive responsible for running its military division. As one of the rare people with T-Virus-compatible DNA he was cloned and used as a template for early Tyrants, specifically Resident Evil 2's T-103 aka Mr X.



Osmund Saddler (dead)

Mysterious leader of the Los Illuminados religious cult, who guarantees a loyal following with the liberal use of mind-controlling Las Plagas parasites. His plan to take over the world by infecting the US government is foiled by Leon Kennedy's RPG to the chops.



James Marcus (dead)

A co-founder of the Umbrella Corporation who created the T-Virus. Murdered by Albert Wesker and William Birkin, Marcus cheated death by bonding with virally modified leeches and took his revenge on Umbrella by releasing the T-Virus on the Arklay Research Centre.



EVIL



Ada Wong

Ice cold double agent who specialises in collecting viral samples during the chaos of an outbreak. Turns up in Raccoon City and, later, in Spain to snatch the G-Virus and Los Plagas respectively for Albert Wesker. Her affections for Leon, however, suggest her heart, if not her loyalties, really lie elsewhere.



Dr Salvador (dead)

The most iconic and terrifying of Resident Evil 4's Los Gananos mutants. His medical qualifications aren't exactly clear and, as the chainsaw and sackcloth mask suggest, he's strayed a fair way from his Hippocratic Oath. If Leon fails to fend off his charging attack, he chainsaws Kennedy's head clean off. 'Take two Nurofen...'



Jack Krauser (dead)

One time friend and fellow agent of Leon Kennedy, Krauser supposedly died in a helicopter crash in 2002, but turns up two years later as a super-human minion of Albert Wesker. He kidnaps Ashley to get close to Saddler and nab a Las Plagas sample. Dies three times during Resi 4's story mode and mini-games.



Ramon Salazar (dead)

Originally from the family that sealed the Las Plagas parasite underground, pipsqueak Ramon was persuaded by Saddler to dig it up and infect the locals. After confronting Leon and Ashley several times he mutates into a giant, tentacled abomination. Leon makes 'short' work of him.



William Birkin (dead)

A fellow (and rival) Umbrella researcher of Wesker's, with whom he assassinated James Marcus in order to fast-track his promotion to head of T-Virus research. Created the G-Virus and was almost killed when Umbrella operative Hunk steamed in to secure it. Injected himself with the virus to survive, albeit as a mutant.

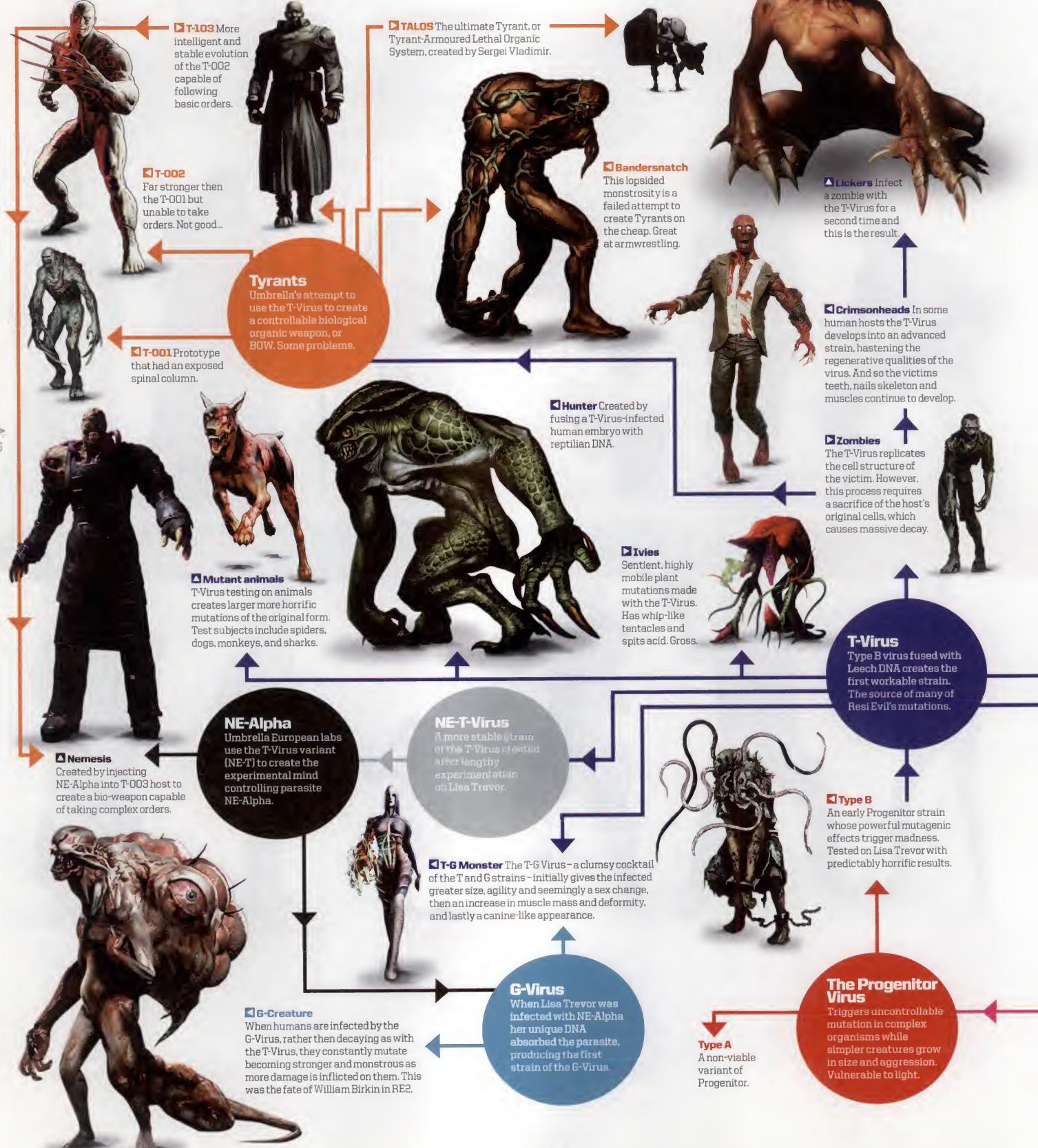


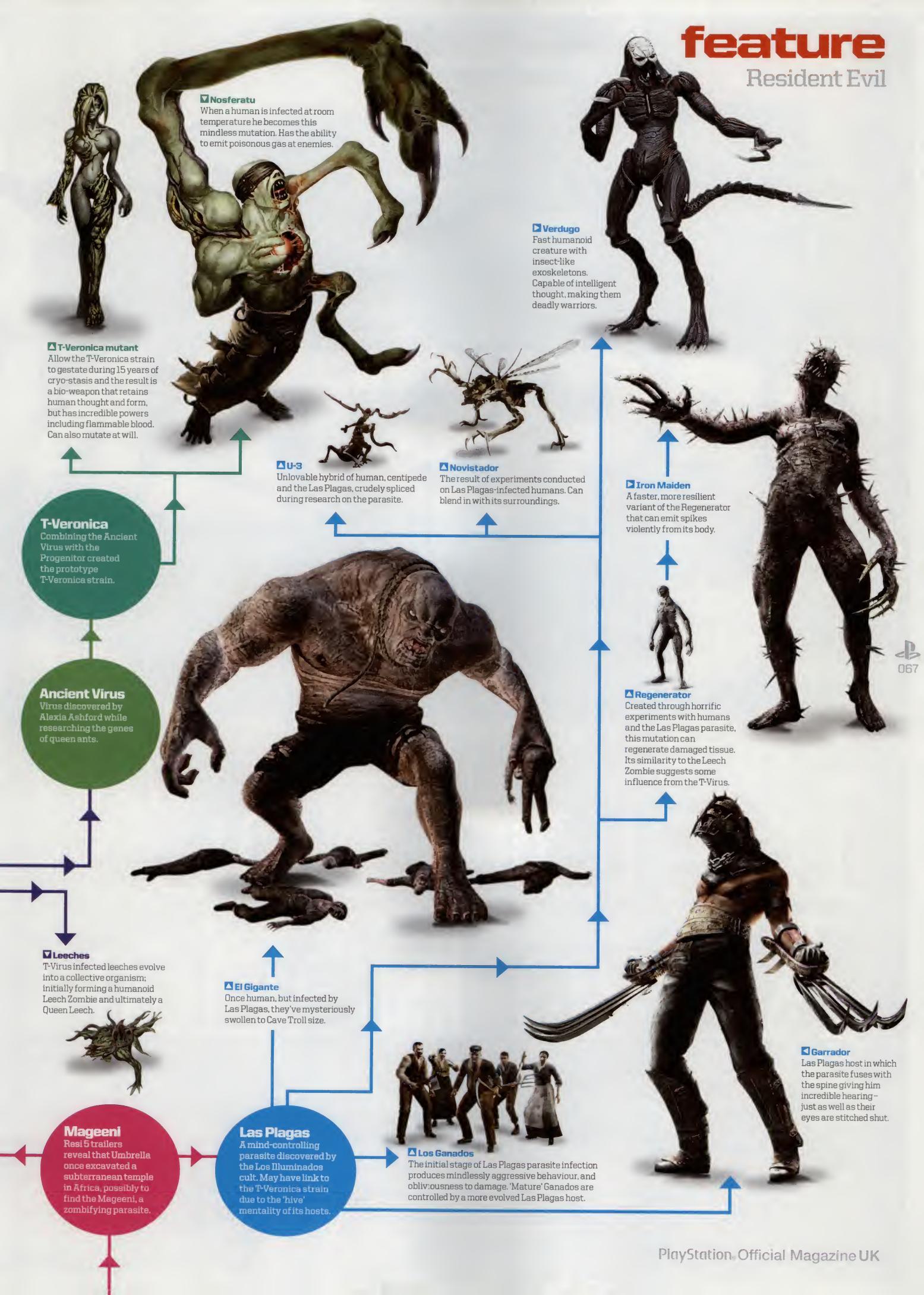
Albert Wesker

For us, the greatest villain on PlayStation. Bert has played a key role in nearly every part of the saga. One-time Umbrella researcher, STARS founder, anti-Umbrella conspirator and super-human ass-kicker. Wants to rebuild the Umbrella empire to serve his will and requires a sample of every bio-weapon virus to do so.

Anatomy of evil

Resident Evil 5 will reveal the source of the series' many mutagenic viruses. Here's what we know right now





OPM
interview



RESISTANCE

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
REPORT
PlayStation[®]
Official Magazine UK

068

Inside The Alien Nation

We talk to Insomniac president Ted Price about Resistance, Ratchet, boss battles, one-hit kills and what's coming next... 

interview

Ted Price

OF2

069

Resistance 2's guns feel much more powerful and aggressive this time out. Were you keen to improve them?

Yeah, we switched to a two-weapon system to unleash a little bit more. In the original game we allowed the player to carry all of the weapons, and we had to be careful not to overpower any particular one because the player might be able to break some setups. But with R2 we were able to create weapons that do some crazy things. The Splicer, for example, fires many, many saw blades – they're bouncing around, taking off limbs and wreaking havoc. But if you were able to carry that gun around all the time, it would be less fun, so what we've done is given you some badass weapons at specific points in the game, so that you can get your kicks, but not get tired of those spikes and that excitement.

With only two weapons, are you worried you'll lose some of the variety and imagination you're known for?

I don't think so. We brought back some of the weapons from Resistance 1 that we really liked – the Bullseye and the Auger – and we updated their functionality so that they would feel fresh. But at the same time, we created new weapons, using the same approach that we had with Resistance 1 – going for broke and saying, 'what can we do that's ultimately going to be fun?'. It doesn't have to be terribly practical, it doesn't have to conform to the physics that we know here in the world, it just has to be fun, cool looking, and fit into the universe in some way.

Did making Ratchet in between the Resistance games help technically?

Ratchet was a huge help. It focused on scale, just like Resistance 2 does in terms of creating very large landscapes and big events in the environment, and we were able to leverage the tech development for Ratchet and use it as a starting point for Resistance 2.

With the emphasis on big set-pieces, do you feel like you've lost that quirky parallel history vibe that the first game had?

Not at all. In fact, I think that bringing the game to America has allowed us to play up the alternate history vibe even better. America is simply easier for us to access, as American developers, and we can travel to different places and do the research easier than we could in England. We learned a lot in Resistance 1 about what was needed to create an alternate history, and I don't think we had as much time to implement those little bits and pieces then like we have now [like] the radio broadcasts from Henry Stillman, which has a very 1950s vibe to it.

Tell us about the development of the Chimera. Were you not tempted to make them more outlandish?

When we were prototyping Resistance 1 – a long time ago, before PS3 was released – we began with this space opera featuring lizardmen. And by lizardmen, I mean giant lizards walking around with tails – definitely not very humanoid. We came to realise that it's not as fun to shoot non-humanoids. You don't get the same satisfaction, for whatever reason. When we moved in a humanoid direction, the game suddenly got a lot more fun. So we came up with the theory that the Chimera are a parasitic species and they take whatever life form is on a particular planet, and modify it to meet their needs. So the hybrids, the main foot soldiers in the game, are pretty close to humans because they spend the least time being converted. The more outlandish creatures in the first game – the Angels, the Howlers, the Widomaker – they're also made of human parts, but it takes longer for them to gestate and pop out as something that's not very humanoid.

environments that it would be a shame to throw it out of the window after one game.

The online component is huge. Were you ever worried that you were taking on more than you could make good?

That's always a risk. We discuss control of design scope here constantly, because we know that it's easy to bite off more than you can chew, especially if you're coming off the success of previous games. When we began discussing 60-player multiplayer, the first thing we ran into was the realisation that having 60 players in an environment can be overwhelming and chaotic, and there was no way we were going to be able to pull this off unless we introduced some very low-level design techniques to mitigate that chaos. And those design features ended up being squads and a dynamic objective system.

You were well into development when COD4 came out. Did you play it, and did it have an effect on you?

It's one of the only games I played all the way

"We began Resistance with lizardmen. I mean giant lizards with tails."

We have to ask about the Furies. Not being able to shoot them was one of the only things we didn't like. Was there much discussion about this?

Yeah, the Furies were challenging for us. Originally they were designed to pop onto land and attack you. But this ended up being problematic for a number of reasons. First we had them shooting you, but that looked goofy. Then we had them crawling after you, but that made them too easy to kill. Finally we wanted you to be apprehensive about falling in the water. So we made them invincible to create what was in effect 'electric water'. If you shoot them they dive under the surface so they're impossible to hit. Was it the right thing to do? Well, given that water in Resistance 1 was instant-kill without any explanation, I think it was an improvement. At least you know what killed you.

It's set up for a third game – was there always a plan to make more than two?

From the very beginning, whenever we come up with a game concept, whether it's Spyro, Ratchet or whatever, our intention is to create a long-life franchise. You put so much time into creating characters and stories and

through last year. It was fantastic; a lot of us here really enjoyed seeing what they did with weaving their story into the game. It was a great balance. They also had some great variety. Even though you're fighting the same soldier over and over again, it felt varied. We took some great inspiration from [that], and we were able to take it in a different direction because we had so many different types of creatures and so many opportunities to change things. It really pushed us to do even more with our own setups.

We also saw the opportunity to do something that no other FPS was doing, and that was introducing bosses. Bosses are something we've done forever with Ratchet, and putting bosses into a first-person shooter ended up being a pretty big challenge. When you're fighting against a 300ft monster, it's not practical to use the same techniques that you've been using throughout the game against smaller enemies. So as designers we have to come up with a way to believably take on these bosses and still make it fun.

Did you ever think about making the boss battles more interactive like, say, the Scarab boss in Halo 3?

It depends on what you mean by interactive. The bosses are all interactive in that you have to damage them to kill them. You also have to avoid their attacks. But our first goal for the boss battles was to create memorable moments. Being picked up by a 300ft Leviathan and being thrown across the rooftops of Chicago should be memorable. Running like hell from the missiles of an angry 200ft Goliath should be memorable. Sliding down a tilted dock into the jaws of a giant Kraken should be memorable.

Compared to other recent shooters – Far Cry 2, Fallout 3 – is it fair to say Resistance 2 is linear?

Yeah. You can say it's linear. We knew that we wanted to make a story-driven first-person shooter. We spent a lot of time on telling more of the story in-game, so it doesn't feel like you're doing two different things – one, being told a story, and two, playing a game.

Do you think there's still more to come from traditional first-person shooters vs, say, open world shooters?

I think open world games are fantastic. But it's harder to tell a linear story in an open world, because the pacing is a little bit more unpredictable – you don't know where the players are going to be at any one time.

Apart from going open world or online, do you see any other ways in which shooters can evolve?

It's funny, to me, that first-person shooters get lumped together no matter what features they have. Most of them have something interesting and different to bring. The one overriding feature tends to be the perspective – the point of view – and that everyone has a gun, or multiple guns. But in terms of their approach to gameplay, and how they integrate story, and whether it's open world or linear – a lot of first-person shooters do a good job of differentiating themselves.

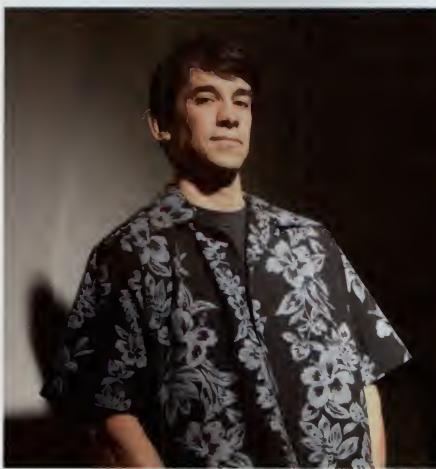
Do you guys have a friendly rivalry with Killzone 2 developer Guerrilla, and are you pleased that it was their game rather than yours that was pushed back until after Christmas?

Well, first of all, I wouldn't say at all that we have a rivalry. We've been friends for a long time. Our engine director has been over there to hang out with the Guerrilla guys, and they've come here, so we definitely respect what they're doing, and their stuff looks beautiful. In terms of the scheduling, that was up to the different territories. SCEA is publishing Resistance 2 and SCEE is publishing Killzone 2, so I think you'd have to ask a Sony person about that.



Who is... Ted Price

Ted Price established Insomniac Games in 1994 with \$30,000 in savings and help from programming brothers Alex and Brian Hastings. All three played PC shooter Doom, and their first game, Disruptor for PS1 in 1996, was also a first-person shooter. The company went on to create the Spyro series on PS1, the Ratchet & Clank series on PS2 and Resistance on PS3. Price is currently the President and CEO of the California-based studio.



How involved are you with the PSP version of Resistance?

We exchange information about the stories for both games to ensure they're both lining up. When the PSP guys starting working on that version of Resistance, we gave them the backstory, we told them everything we were doing with Resistance 2, and went back and discussed the best way for the two games to work together and support each other. They came up with a really cool story that fits in the Resistance universe. So it's been a very collaborative process.

One of the big Sony success stories of 2008 was LittleBigPlanet. Do you think that in sackboy Sony has finally found its Sonic or Mario?

Sony's always been very vocal about not having a mascot. And there are a lot of very strong characters within the PlayStation universe, going all the way back to PS1 – Crash Bandicoot, Spyro, Solid Snake, Lara Croft. These are all characters that have been synonymous with one or more of the PlayStation platforms and I understand and agree with Sony's philosophy to not put one character forward and say 'this is the mascot', because there are so many other great options for people to latch on to.

There are more and more high-profile figureheads within the games industry. You're the spokesperson for very big exclusive Sony titles. Do you ever dislike talking to the press?

I enjoy talking to the press – it's taught me to think a little bit more before I speak and also helps me and the others to understand what the rest of the world is thinking. It's easy for us, when we're developing 24/7, to get too narrowly focused on what we do. If we don't talk to people who are observing our games critically, then we lose perspective and it's more difficult for us to deliver what fans and critics want.

Do you have an example of a time when you've been badly misquoted?

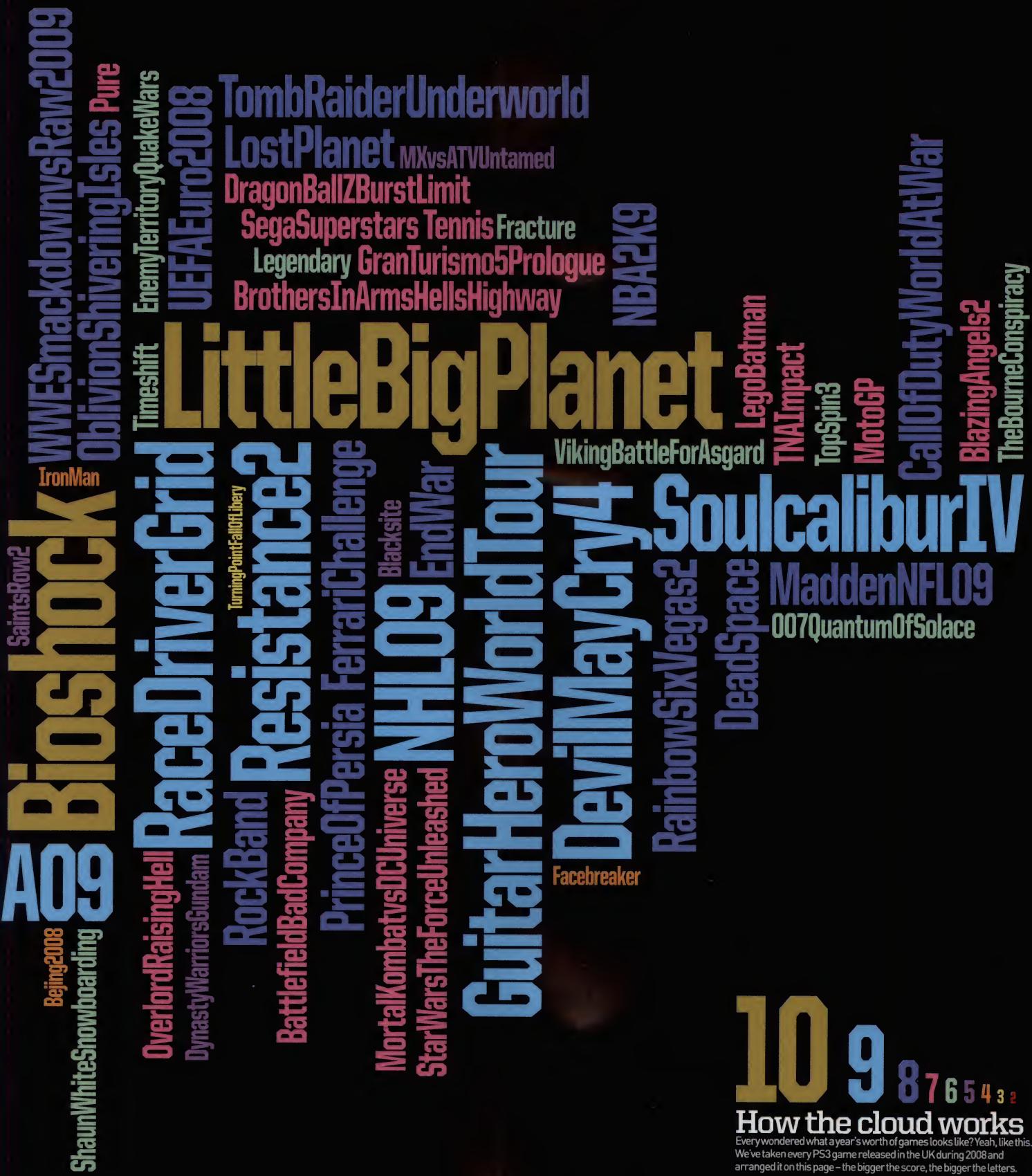
Haha! Yes! Tons. It's easy to get upset about it, but whenever I've been misquoted, I've gone back to what I've said in the interview and generally it's been my fault for not being careful enough. I understand that things get taken out of context, and some people who're writing articles have a specific agenda that I may not understand, and as a result I may get myself into trouble. It's taught all of us here at Insomniac to really focus on what's most important, and that's the games, and helping people to understand what it is that we are trying to accomplish with the games that we make.

PS3 in 2008

See how every game scored at a glance

MonsterMadness
Valkyria Chronicles
TigerWoodsPGATour09
UnrealTournamentIII
NBALive09
Haze
TimeCrisis4
SoldierOffortunePayback
AloneInTheDarkinferno
CivillizationRevolution

A collage of video game titles and logos on a black background. The titles are arranged in a non-linear, overlapping fashion. Some of the visible titles include: ArmyOfTwo, BlitzTheLeague2, Mercenaries2WorldInFlames, Condemned2, PES2009, NeedForSpeedUndercover, TheOrangeBox (with BajaEdgeOfControl logo), BuzzQuizTV, NHL2K9, NightClubLosAngeles, NASCAR9, MirrorsEdge, TheIncredibleHulk, NBA08, MotorStormPacificRift, TheClub, Fallout3, ConflictDenied0ps, FIFAStreet3, Beowulf, BurnoutParadise, Monopoly, Turok, LegoIndianaJones, SBK08SuperbikeWorldChampionship, HellboyTheScienceOfEvil, HailToTheChimp, GTAV, Wall, SingStarVol2, FarCry2, KungFuPanda, GuitarHeroAero, and F1.



10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

How the cloud works

Every wondered what a year's worth of games looks like? Yeah, like this. We've taken every PS3 game released in the UK during 2008 and arranged it on this page – the bigger the score, the bigger the letters.

feature

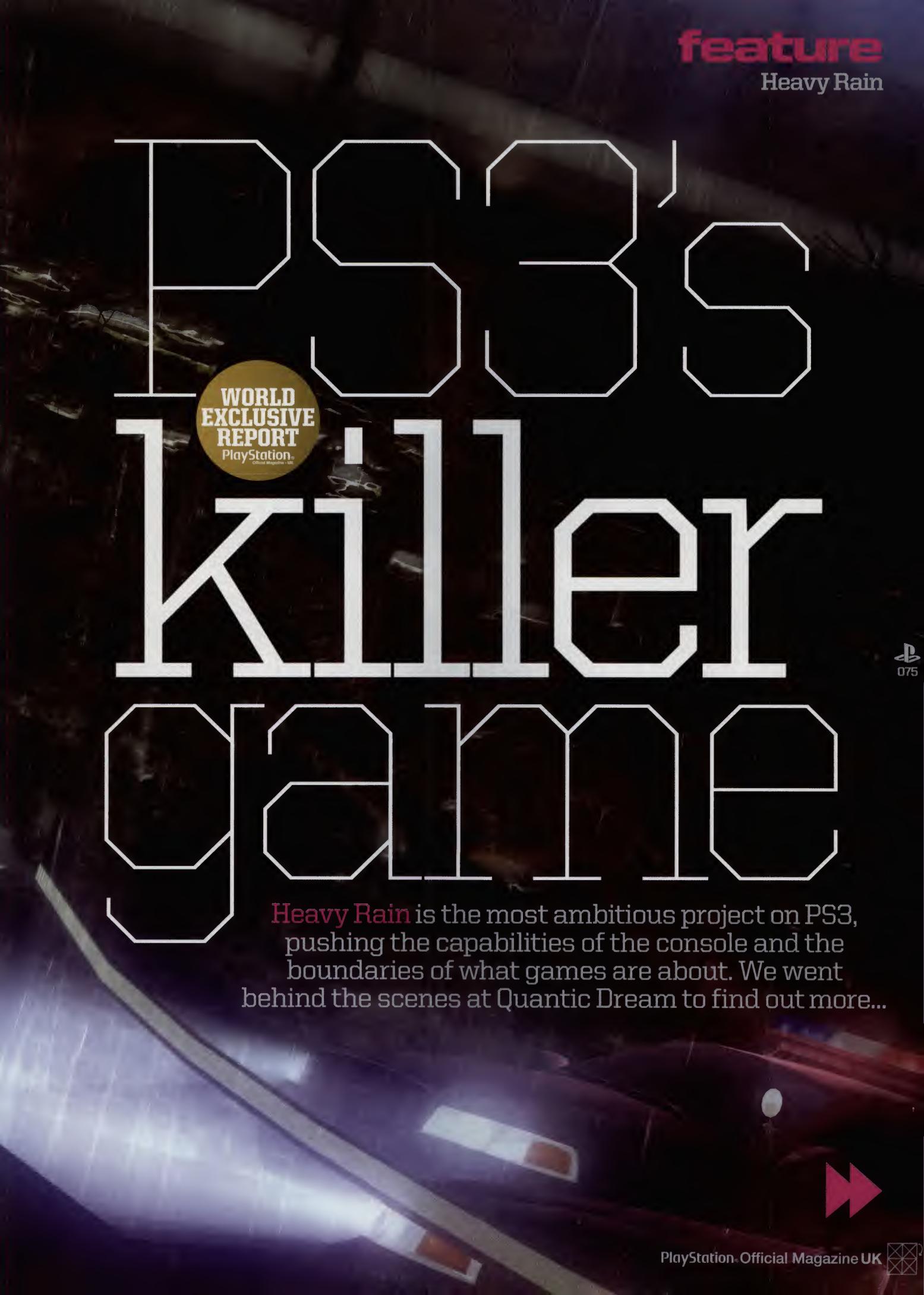
Heavy Rain



Heavy Rain will follow several characters all linked by a serial killer. Quantic Dream told us this man is "with the police", but refused to explain in what capacity.



PlayStation. Official Magazine UK



WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
REPORT
PlayStation.
Official Magazine • UK

Killer

075

Heavy Rain is the most ambitious project on PS3, pushing the capabilities of the console and the boundaries of what games are about. We went behind the scenes at Quantic Dream to find out more...



"I have a dream..."

David Cage, Quantic Dream's founder and head, talks Heavy Rain



I don't make games for the Daily Mail." David Cage is explaining the ethos behind Heavy Rain, the most intriguing exclusive currently in development for PS3. He tells us that this ambitious undertaking – a noir thriller utilising state-of-the-art motion and facial capture – will be a mature experience that he hopes will "explore things that are serious and related to adults". He says, "I don't think we do anything worse than what you see on TV at 8 o'clock at home. And I don't think being interactive gives you fantastic power to change the minds of people and make them do things they'd never think of doing otherwise. We are like movies or books. I just try to create an experience that is entrancing and definitely not for kids." Obviously, we're in.

Wet and wild

For now, though, he's keeping the exact story a secret. Heavy Rain's subtitle, The Origami Killer, is the only real clue as to what the plot involves. In the Taxidermist demo, the tech demo developed to show off Heavy Rain's gameplay, an inquisitive journalist called Madison explores a house in search of the paper-folding murderer but finds, instead, a gutted body in a bath and a *different* serial killer who stuffs female victims and poses them in idyllic scenes of domestic bliss. It's a dark set-piece that demonstrates Cage's vision: an immersive, cinematic experience where you're partly involved in, and partly directing, the action. The unusual controls see you aiming the character's head with the left analogue stick and using **△** to move in the direction you're looking. It frees the camera to cut between angles or pan across the action without confusing the player, who'll always move in the direction they're facing. Later, during a chase, the player must snatch at prompts flashing on screen: run left or right, remain calm or panic? Each decision branches the story, creating another path, another eventuality.

It might sound like a game-long interactive cut-scene but in practice you're always in control and, most importantly, involved in the action. "What's really important to us is that we use the interface to create immersion," Cage explains. "When

your character hides you need to hold buttons on the controller to remain hidden." So for Madison to hide by awkwardly cramming herself into a cupboard, the player must press an equally uncomfortable arrangement of buttons. "We use the interface as much as we can to make you feel like your character feels. At the same time we try to simplify the interface as much as possible. The challenge shouldn't be how to do things, it should be what do you want to do and what are the consequences. With a simple system people can forget the interface and do things naturally. The focus is: 'What will happen? What are the consequences of my actions?'"

But while the Taxidermist is a great example of the gameplay and production values, you won't be seeing it in the finished game. Madison, yes, but that particular scenario is simply a demonstration of what Quantic Dream is shooting for. In particular, their work with actors and motion capture; something they



"Decisions branch the story."

first showed in *The Casting*, a short film featuring an actress playing a spurned lover. "We learnt many things," says Cage of this initial experience with PS3 tech. "The first thing is the importance of the acting. Aurélie Brancilhon (the star of *The Casting*) is a fantastic actress. We felt that we only got about 50% of her performance in the final result. We didn't have the technology to capture the eyes so we had to post-animate that by hand. The result is okay but there is something wrong. With new technology, we've motion captured the eyes now and we do that for every single character."

Acting up

The results of Quantic Dream's advances in motion capture are impressive. We see a junkie called Nathaniel, a bodyguard and a policeman performing various facial animations captured from the original actors. We also see an old man, delivering one side of a conversation about how his son "is not involved in these murders". The words may be infuriatingly cryptic but he is eerily realistic to look at ➤

Rain will fall

Madison **1** is an ambitious, risk-taking journalist and one of the few characters named in Heavy Rain so far. The story opens with the discovery of a body on a patch of wasteland **2**. This man arrives on the murder scene **3** with a police escort. Our hunch is that he's an FBI psychological profiler brought in to examine the Origami Killer's latest victim.



David Cage is a professional musician who worked on film, TV and videogame soundtracks before founding Quantic Dream in 1997.

THE SPEED OF LIGHT

"This is without question the most exciting Sonic game for over 10 years"



- CLASSIC 2D AND STUNNING 3D GAMEPLAY.
- SUPERCHARGED SPRINT AROUND THE GLOBE AS SONIC RETURNS IN HIS FASTEST ADVENTURE EVER!
- FIERCE WEREHOG FIGHTING WITH SUPER STRENGTH AND COMBAT SKILLS.



"In Heavy Rain even dying isn't the end."

- the skin wrinkled, cheeks scrunched, the eyes darted. The policeman in particular, moodily lit in semi-shadow, was truly indistinguishable from his real life counterpart. And the really exciting news? Everything we're looking at is being shown at in-game quality.

According to Cage, "It's much more than just recreating an actor – it's recreating a performance. Recreating a human is easy: we have a 3D scanner, we scan your face and there you are. Where it becomes difficult is if you move. And even more difficult if you talk. All this has to look real, and it's really awkward. It's about getting the same subtlety I'd get if I was filming you. I'd get the reflections in your eyes, the way they move, your stance, every detail. There are so many things that create an impression – the slightest detail may be important to the general impression."

The plot thickens

The attention to detail is absolutely crucial to the game's success because, as Cage explains, Heavy Rain is an incredibly complex project in terms of storytelling. "Usually a movie script has 100-120 pages. Heavy Rain has about 2,000 pages; roughly the size of 20 movies. And it doesn't tell one story, it tells 12 stories interlinked with

History

Omkron: The Nomad Soul (1999, PC, Dreamcast)

Quantic Dream's first game was an FPS adventure that saw players entering another dimension as a body-hopping 'nomad soul' trying to solve a series of murders. Turns out the killings are the work of demons trying to return their banished leader Astaroth to power. It featured David Bowie as Boz, an electronic deity that leads a group called The Awakened.



7+

ask
about
games
.com



PlayStation®2

PLAYSTATION®3

www.pegi.info

"PS", "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION", and "PS3", and are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved.



David Cage is justly proud of Quantic Dream's 3D scanning facility, which enables the development team to capture incredibly detailed physical likenesses.

different options and consequences. We use this technique to draw our story like a rubber band – it'll stretch depending on your actions." According to Cage, in Heavy Rain even dying becomes a flexible concept. "There's no 'game over' situation here. We treat death like an event in the script and the story continues."

The game's night-time opening sets the tone for the journey ahead. A body has been discovered on a patch of wasteland; policeman scour the bushes with torches, rain lashes the squad cars, wind whips at the tape cordoning off the area, and at its centre is a shallow grave blasted by spotlights. It's a brief glimpse at the oppressive atmosphere Quantic Dream will be using to tell the story and sets a bracingly grim tone.

This murky crime scene opener also poses many more questions than it answers but, if Cage is right, what happens next in Heavy Rain is *entirely* up to you, "It's an interactive experience. You're thrust into the shoes of the hero of a movie that changes based on your actions. Hopefully it's an exciting premise – I think it's going to be a very new type of experience. You can never say if it's good or bad at this stage, but I'm pretty sure it's going to be different." ▶

Fahrenheit (2005, PS2)

This supernatural murder mystery put you in control of several characters involved in a ritualistic killing. The main hero was the apparent murderer but you also controlled the police investigating the case. The third-person action was intercut with cinematic quick-time events while controls mirrored activities – rotating an analogue stick to turn a door handle, say.



THE POWER OF NIGHT



SONIC UNLEASHED™

OUT NOW



www.sonic-unleashed.com

Wii

XBOX 360 LIVE

over 100 stores
free delivery online
zavvi
zavvi.co.uk

Toys R Us

SONIC TEAM

SEGA
www.sega.co.uk

© SEGA. SEGA, the SEGA logo and Sonic Unleashed are either trademarks or registered trademarks of SEGA Corporation. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, Inc. Wii AND THE WII LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. All Rights Reserved.

Character creation

How Quantic Dream is bringing the cast of Heavy Rain to life

1 Face off

Every character, like 'Paco's Bodyguard' here, has a detailed design document. As well as an initial illustration the brief includes real life influences and other reference material.



Inspirations

Regular in Robert Rodriguez's movies, Danny Trejo, is one of the main influences behind Paco's Bodyguard.



2 Model behaviour

Relative unknown actor David Press was cast as Paco's Bodyguard. Quantic Dream uses numerous reference photos of each actor to help create the final in-game performer.



Revel in the detail

According to Quantic Dream's founder, David Cage (above), "The main thing we learnt with The Casting [a tech demo for Heavy Rain] is the importance of art direction. We had to think about everything in the scene according to the emotion we want to trigger. The tree branches moving outside because of the wind, the raindrops on the window – these details become very important in the final result."



Snappy dresser

There's a huge attention to detail throughout the design process. Not only are the bodyguard's clothes individually 'tailored' but real life garments are researched and referenced to ensure everything he wears is as authentic as possible. With so much effort poured into capturing realistic performances, every last fabric and accessory needs to be spot on.



Photo finish

Using in-house 3D scanners 1 Quantic Dream is able to capture an exact virtual model of the actor. Using the photographs the art team are then able to recreate his likeness 2 and clean up any noise from the scanning process. The final three dimensional model 3 is then ready to be mapped on to the facial motion capture system.



3 Body cast

The final result is a complete in-game recreation of the character, ready to have life breathed into it using the actor's performances captured on Quantic Dream's motion capture set.



Body of work The T-pose 1 and 2 has two functions. Firstly it exposes every surface of the model to ensure there are no featureless blank spots. Secondly, it provides a useful, initial 'sync' position for the actor while technicians calibrate the motion capture equipment. Once set up, everything from body language to posture is translated onto the model, enabling the finished article 3 to move with the maximum believability.

4 Finishing touches

Facial motion capture is a separate process to full body capture and records far more information over a smaller area, capturing the subtlest motion or twitches.



PlayStation
081

5 In motion

Full motion capture uses infra-red cameras to capture the movement of reflective balls on the actors' suits. Sets and props are either made of wire or are full of holes to prevent any camera's view from being obscured.

**All quiet on set**

When it comes to motion capture, there are several people on set. "I'm focused on the actors," says David Cage, "so I'm only concerned by the performance and what the scene is about. There's also a motion capture director who's making sure that, from a technical point of view, everything's fine."

Scoping the scene

How Heavy Rain's atmospheric crime opening was created



1 Setting the scene

Before anything was created on PS3, Quantic Dream's ten-person art team spent a year and a half creating storyboards, illustrations and mood concepts for every key moment in the game.



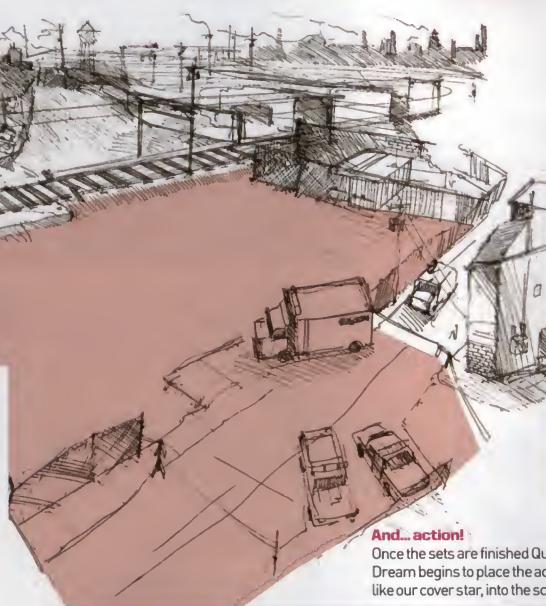
2 Location research

Two weeks were spent scouting locations on the East Coast of the US for images to inform the design of everything from buildings to plastic bags fluttering against fences.



3 Sketching it out

Sketching it out
The various elements were then brought together, with the help of a Hollywood set designer, rough sketches placing objects in the scene and fixing the overall layout.



And... action!
Once the sets are finished Quantic Dream begins to place the actors, like our cover star, into the scene.

5 Set dressing

The incredible volume of highly detailed props and objects were outsourced to external companies who use precise notes, references and schematics to quickly create the vast amount required.



4 Building blocks

Early construction of the environment used simple, untextured models to block out the basic scene, plan camera angles and place props. These sets had to match the ones used by the actors during motion capture exactly.



Entering the lair

The Lizard has yet to be revealed, but his home speaks volumes...

1 Grime scene

With a name like The Lizard it's a safe bet this character isn't one of the good guys. A glance at this concept art showing his apartment just confirms that first impression. It's a slimy, rotting collection of rooms, filled with filth, junk and decay.



3 The worst toilet in the world

The research team's dedication to gathering the grimy reference material needed to create The Lizard's lair saw them entering more derelict buildings than they care to remember. The resulting collection of photos includes rotting food, dirt-encrusted sinks and the most disgusting loo this side of the Fratton Park away stand.



4 Finishing touches

Just as with some of the game's external sets references, designs and measurements for the lair were then sent overseas to be built. Once complete Quantic Dream took these 'rough sets', and went about adding all the fine (read: filthy) details.



5 Real estate

The finished apartment looks as realistic as it does because much of it – the toilet, rubbish and general filth – was referenced from existing locations. When applied to the bare model, The Lizard's lair really takes on that 'died in' look and feel.



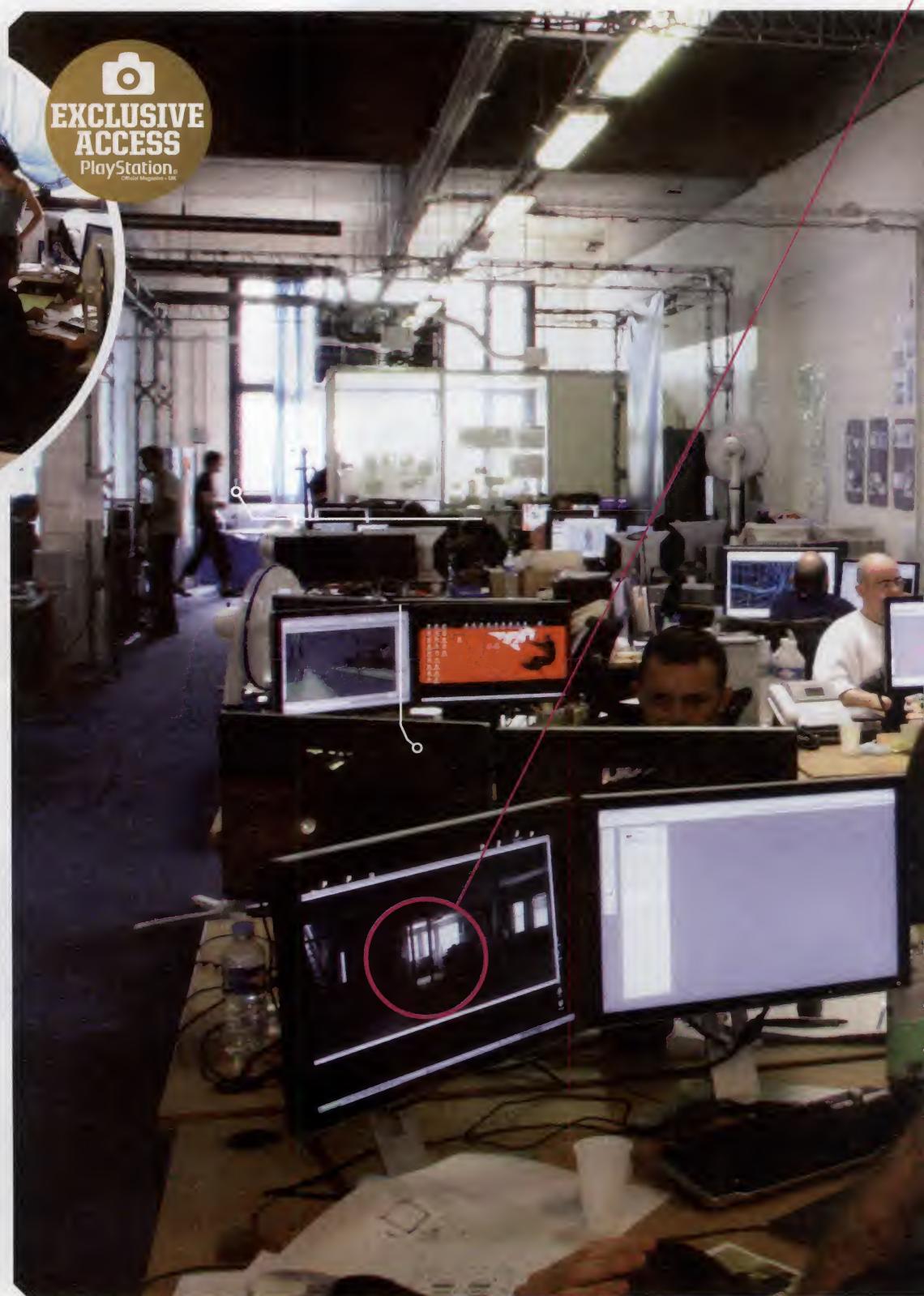
Secrets of the studio

Behind the scenes at Quantic Dream's studio in Paris



EXCLUSIVE
ACCESS
PlayStation®
Official Magazine • UK

It's a small door on a plain Parisian street that leads into the Heavy Rain developer's studio. But once inside it's a completely different story. They have their own 3D scanning system to recreate perfect virtual copies of the actors' faces and two motion capture studios; one for small scenes and a massive one for crowd work and complex set-pieces. "We've done mo-cap with the hero trying to find their way in a crowd," explains David Cage, "so we had one actor and then 20 people on set to push though." In total over 70 actors and stunt men have passed through the studio during the game's production. That might sound like a lot, but there are even more people behind the scenes. Over 200 internal staff have been working on Heavy Rain for three years while another 500 additional people working externally, creating props, sets or processing the huge volumes of motion capture data. However, while these shots seem to simply show the Paris team at work, closer inspection reveals a few juicy secrets...



Home from home

This location is similar to the Taxidermist's house suggesting that, like the actor playing the killer in the tech demo, it could reappear in Heavy Rain under a different guise.

Sharp dresser

It's impossible to make out this character's name but he appears to be a young man judging by his slight build. The numerous images of sharp outfits and flashy sunglasses suggest a wealthy person with expensive tastes.

Police presence

It's a little hard to read but it looks like this character is 'Carter Blake - Police Inspector' and must be the older, bearded character we glimpsed briefly during the game's opening crime scene.

The private detective

Under the title 'Scott Shelby - The Private Detective' the actor in the photographs appears to be the same person who portrayed the murderer in the Taxidermist demo. This must be his real role in the main game.

Little bird

There are several origami birds here; it seems Quantic Dream considered several options before settling on the 'pajarita' design seen in the game's teaser poster. Not all of them were birds either – one looks like a cat.

In the detail

These images appear to show all the props associated with the private detective. Everything from desks, binoculars, chairs, clocks, cabinets and coffee pots have been referenced and catalogued.



In the mood for... Cops

Whether you're upholding the law or tearing it apart, the PlayStation police are never far away

Given that the amount of gunfire in your average shooter makes West Baltimore look like Eastbourne, it's no surprise to find the boys in blue 'ello, 'ello, elloing in your rear view mirror. But John Q Law has a shaky record on PlayStation. For every honest copper, there's a bad apple shooting up the barrel. Even the good guys can get pretty nasty when needs must and the captain's busting their chops. Hey, whatever gets the job done. Here are some of the finest, and worst, to wear the badge.

Cybil Bennett (*Silent Hill 1*)

Anyone in Silent Hill who's not the hero is doomed. Lead character Harry meets Cybil early in the game where she helps out until she becomes possessed.

She then tries quite hard to kill him. Depending on your mood and whether or not you found the aglaophotis herb, you can save her. Otherwise it's time for a bullet-themed retirement party.

Inspector Tequila (*Stranglehold*)

Inspector Tequila actually does very little inspecting. His main strength is shooting suspects. Preferably while cartwheeling onto a banister in slo-mo, dual-wielding Berettas. When he runs out of people to shoot in Hong Kong he moves to Chicago in pursuit of the mobsters who've kidnapped his family.

Shibito Cop (*Siren: Blood Curse*)

The Shibito (zombie) cop is not your average bobby on the beat. Undead and cackling madly he's only interested in killing you. No matter how much you hurt him he just keeps coming. A severe shovelling to the head only makes him angrier, while a fence post through the gut just adds to his unstoppable psychopath allure.

intermission

A tasty PlayStation snack

Leon S Kennedy (Resident Evil 2)

Worst first day at work, ever. When Leon shows up at Racoon City PD to start life as a rozzie, he finds the city overrun with zombies. Like most game cops he doesn't do much paperwork (beyond reading memos), preferring instead to shoot things. He graduates as a government agent in Resi 4 and saves the President's daughter, Ashley.



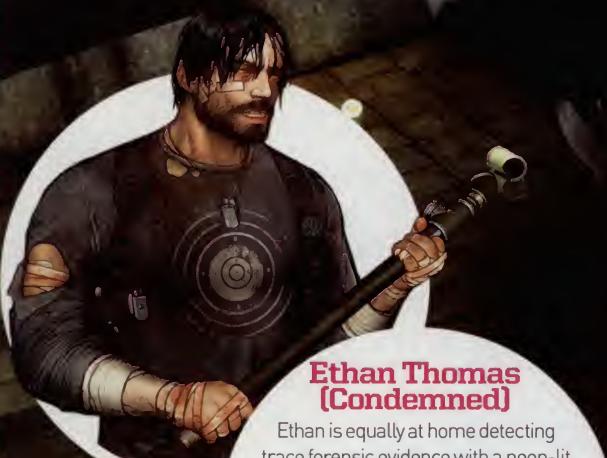
Tenpenny (GTA San Andreas)

With Samuel L Jackson providing the voice, officer Tenpenny is one of gaming's greatest corrupt cops. Drugs, gangs, murder, racketeering – he's done it all, and he's been arrested for it. But when San Andreas's lead character CJ kills the only witnesses, Tenpenny gets acquitted, sparking city-wide riots. In the chaos CJ runs him down in a fire truck.



Ethan Thomas (Condemned)

Ethan is equally at home detecting trace forensic evidence with a neon-lit techno gadget as he is inflicting fatal head injuries with a locker door. After his first encounter with Serial Killer X left him a washed-out alcoholic, it was probably a mistake to let him back on the case again. The several hundred tramps he batters as a result would probably agree.



Tanner (Driver)

An ex-racing driver turned cop. If only there was an auto theft syndicate that needed crack driving skills to bring down. Oh, wait, there's one. After arresting them and saving the

President Tanner embarks on a globe-hopping crime fight as later instalments hit places like Rio de Janeiro, Nice and Istanbul.

"Yeah chief, I've got a lead in, um, Hawaii?"



Now have your say

Any uniforms we didn't mention? Email us at opm@futurenet.com and let us know. Here are some that almost made it:

■ The police chief in *Hitman Contracts* who meets with the Triad leader. Time it right and you can take them both out with one bullet.

■ The civil protection cop you meet in *Half-Life 2* who tells you to pick up the trash. He's asking for it, but you can't kill him.

■ The *Darkness*'s corrupt police chief Eddie Shrote – he has a thing for home dentistry with power tools...

back issues

Feed your obsession



Issue #019
June 2008

- MGS4 review & retrospective
- Race Driver Grid
- Street Fighter IV
- Resident Evil 5



Issue #020
July 2008

- 007: Quantum Of Solace
- Ultimate GTA IV guide
- Haze
- Far Cry 2



Issue #021
August 2008

- Killzone 2
- Future of shooters special
- David Jaffe interview
- LittleBigPlanet



Issue #022
September 2008

- Mirror's Edge
- Resident Evil 5
- Access All Areas @ E3
- Soulcalibur IV

Back issues



Late to the party? There's no need to miss out...



Issue #023
October 2008

- FIFA 09
- Street Fighter special
- Mercenaries 2: World In Flames
- Hideo Kojima interview



Issue #024
November 2008

- LittleBigPlanet
- Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising
- inFamous
- PES 2009



Issue #025
December 2008

- Resistance 2
- White Knight Chronicles
- LittleBigPlanet guide
- 42-page reviews blowout



Issue #026
Christmas 2008

- Prince Of Persia
- Guitar Hero vs Rock Band
- Killzone 2
- PlayStation Network special

To order an issue of Official PlayStation Magazine, just call **0870 837 4773** or visit myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Never miss an issue again, and save cash
Subscribe on page 36



PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Reviews

Your essential guide to every new release

Trying economic times have meant two of the team have resorted to cutting their own hair. (This year's big look: day-release inmate.) And in the post-Christmas lull, we might have to resort to making our own games too. It's all a bit quiet out there. Mainly because, like greedy children who've eaten all their advent calendar chocolate in one go, we've already reviewed everything. So while other mags are only just getting to Prince Of Persia, to us it's old news.

What we *do* have is a review of the brilliant and elaborately named Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix, which is just as ruinously addictive as it was when we were teenagers, but like ex-girlfriends you run into at parties, it's also looking way prettier. We also rate the new Sonic – part return to form, bigger part sadness – sing along to chirpy PSP sequel Locoroco 2 and spend loads of time on PSN with Crash Commando and Burn Zombie Burn.

Next month: our world exclusive review of Killzone 2. It's going to be *huge*.

90

SUPER SFII TURBO HD REMIX
Now with fake fireballs! Capcom's fighting classic returns with a sexy makeover.

92

SONIC UNLEASHED
Like a spiky blue lover we just keep taking back, Sonic is definitely on his final chance this time round. See if he can win us over...

100

LOCOROCO 2
Daan-dah! Daan-dah-dah bingy bah ding dah... We've fallen in love with the weird smiling blobs again. Jump you fool!

How we score our reviews...

10 Essential
Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

9 Outstanding
Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

8 Very good
Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

7 Good
Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

6 Reasonable
A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

5 Average
A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

4 Below average
Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

3 Poor
A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

2 Awful
A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

1 Horrific
Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.

GOLD AWARD
PlayStation® Official Magazine

Our highest accolade
The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and profound appeal.

✓ Miserablist karate kid Ryu is still the purist's character of choice.



Undisputed champ

Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix

Goodness gracious, great balls of fire



Info

Format PSN download ETA Out now! Pub Capcom Dev Backbone Ent Players 1-2 Web snipurl.com/8v9ga It's like The Chapman bros drawing new graphics on a classic.

Whether you prefer ritual sacrifice, birthday wishes or praying to a big wizard in the sky, it's a rare day that you get exactly what you asked for. But for gamers of a certain age that's what SSFII HD Remix will be. Because the truth is that, beyond hardcore fans who breathe spinning piledrivers, most of us didn't much care for the Street Fighter III or Street Fighter Alpha offshoots, with their increasingly bloated and unlovable line-ups. No, what we wanted, what we in fact demanded, was the same old Super Street Fighter II Turbo – only with prettier pictures. And it

turns out those black cockerels didn't die in vain, because that's precisely what Capcom has delivered on PSN.

Graphics first, then. Every art asset in the game – characters, animation and backdrops – has been redrawn in gorgeous, chunky, manga-inflected 1080p. That part of the project was handled by the team at Udon Entertainment (which also does the Street Fighter comics) and is a total triumph. The artists have managed to refresh the graphics for 16:9 hi-def displays without sacrificing any of SFII's inimitable style and charm. There are some lovely little flourishes too – like the heat haze off Ken's flaming dragon punch and motion blur on Honda's hundred-hand slap. What there aren't, though, are any extra frames of animation – because that would mess with the combo



system's Quartz timing. And that, obviously, would be *madness*.

We can rebuild it

So to the gameplay, of which there are two flavours to sample. 'Original' is precisely as you remember it from the heady days of the mid-'90s. (Britpop, be honest now... a bit rubbish.) Within a few rounds the muscle memory starts to return, and getting reacquainted with your cheesiest, nastiest combos proves to be an oddly comforting feeling. Within an hour or so I was stringing Vega's leg sweep into Crystal Flash into Izuna drop into another leg sweep and colleagues were turning blue with fury.

The genius of SFII – and it really is genius – resides in the balance. Controlled by a skilled player, every character has a deep and varied



ScorePole

It's a decade old but SFII holds its own against the mighty Calibur IV. Poor old MK looks on in despair.

Five remixed moves



RYU'S FAKE FIREBALL

Do a quarter circle towards your opponent ending in jab and you'll quickly throw the animation but not the ball. Ideal for tricking your enemy into jumping then hitting him with a Dragon Punch.



DHALSIM'S YOGA TELEPORT

Now only requires two kick or punch buttons pressed simultaneously to activate, rather than three. Good news for our ever-growing RSI problem.



CHUN-LI'S SPINNING BIRD KICK

You can charge the aerial version of the move while in mid-air, meaning you can activate it immediately after one of her dainty head stomps.



HONDA'S SUPER TORPEDO

The jab version of fatty's Flying Headbutt travels less distance but can knock out fireballs. Still the Camembert of fighter choices, as it's even easier to activate Hundred Hand Slap proves.



SAGAT'S TIGER KNEE

Having his bony leg driven into your face will now always knock you down and 'juggle' you, opening you up for more cheap hits as you bounce around in the air. Thanks Capcom!



▲ Pretty boy Spaniard Vega (right) is the ultimate show-off's character thanks to his aerial specials.



▲ Russian bear Zangief remains a 'specialist' choice as he's reliant on his powerful throws.



▲ Designed by Capcom's US office, rubbish Dee Jay (left) remains a hate figure on the SFII scene.

repertoire of moves which, timed right, will trump your opponent's attack. It's like rock, paper, scissors but with a hundred different types of scissor. The result is matches that ebb and flow as you test each other's defences, probing for weakness, exploiting mistakes, and revelling in the microsecond margin between victory and *endless shame for your entire family*.

The new 'HD Remix' mode, meanwhile, contains a dizzying array of little tweaks. All the characters have had changes made to the damage, range, and recovery time of their attacks – check out the full breakdown at snipurl.com/5gayg. Most of the rebalancing will only be noticeable to total SFII nerds, but I did find that one of my (cheesiest,



PS3



nastiest) Guile combos seems to have been nerfed. One problem for anyone raised on the SNES version is that the Dual Shock's stiffer D-pad isn't as suited to rolling your thumb through quarter circles, making specials less comfortable to execute. But there's always the option of buying a stick, and be grateful you don't have to endure the 360° fat Fisher Price D-pad.

On the subject of difficulty, the package feels built for returning fans. Even on the normal setting the CPU puts up brutal resistance. The hope is, of course, that the real juice will be found online. However, with no servers available at time of writing we were unable to test the network mode, and given that no game is immune from lag there's a very real worry as to how one that relies on frame-perfect timing will work. (Or more likely: won't.) However, even offline I noticed some odd glitches where blows didn't seem to connect. But it was very rare, and the developer is currently



2up
second opinion

Name Nathan Ditum
Angle A new challenger

"I properly loved SFII back in the day – when it finally arrived on Mega Drive I borrowed right-on £100 for the game and two six-button pads – and this polished-up version looks incredible. But it's also, barring minuscule changes, exactly the same, and 15 years on I'm not sure that's enough. It's spectacular for a few rounds, but before long I'll be back to *Calibur*."

Best for...
Nostalgic pass-the-pad parties

investigating. We'll let you know more about the online side next month, but even if you're limited to playing a friend in the same room this feels like an essential download. Not for empty nostalgia, but because the brilliant core gameplay remains deep like the Mariana Trench. Go get. **Tim Clark**



✓ The side-on parts of Sonic are great. It's just everything else that's bust.



Split personality

Sonic Unleashed

Guaranteed to leave you feeling blue



Info

Format: PS3 ETA: Out now
Pub: Sega Dev: Sonic Team
Players: 1 Web: sonic-unleashed.com
It's like: An old friend scooping out your eye with a melon baller.

Let's start with the good news. 20% of Sonic Unleashed is *brilliant*. If you've been waiting for Sega's hog to go back to 2D basics, then the new, side-on, super fast '2.5D' bits won't disappoint. Rings are hoovered up before you've even spotted them. Blasting through enemies with twitchy taps of @ quickly becomes an always-fulfilling instinct. And watching pretty levels fly by in beautiful motion blur is delightful every time. Not since Sonic Adventure has a Sonic game provided highs like this. Yes!

And now for the soul destroying bit. The other 80% of Sonic Unleashed is an overflowing cauldron of bad design, tedious enemies, disastrous control issues and endless, needless talk. (A major component in the game is chatting to bystanders about stuff you really couldn't care less about. WHY?!). And as good as it looks when that motion blur

kicks in, the visuals are a very mixed bag. There's some wonderfully lavish CG video, including an incredible opening in which Eggman essentially destroys the planet, setting up the storyline whereby Sonic must travel the globe to restore the power of the chaos emeralds. But there's also a lot of pixelated scenery and some ugly cut-scenes that put paid to the notion that, for all their gameplay flaws, Sonic games are always pretty.

Dark times

The sea change for Unleashed is the introduction of Sonic's alter-ego, the Werehog. Each of the planet's seven regions acts as a hub from which you begin levels or converse with the locals (again: ARGH!). By walking up to an hourglass within that region (or moving the sun on the in-game map), Sonic can turn day into night and become



Timeline Sonic series lowlights

1994



Sonic Drift
Game Gear

A bit like Mario Kart. But with crap courses. And crap handling. And only four characters. So, just to reiterate: Crap.

2000



Sonic Shuffle
Dreamcast

Sonic's attempt at a party game. Dull, card-based gameplay + horrendous loading times = infinite fail.

2005



Shadow The Hedgehog
PS2

Sonic's dark alter-ego wields a Glock and kills civilians... then turns out to be the good guy. Booooo!

2006



Sonic Riders
PS2

Shallow hybrid of racing and, erm, snowboarding, that was fun. For exactly 12 minutes.

2007



Sonic The Hedgehog
PS3

Ruined by terrible camerawork and levels specifically designed to ready for this? STOP YOU GOING FAST. What?

half wolf, half hedgehog. Instead of the speedy Sonic acts, the slower Werehog ones combine puzzling, platforming, and combat. Completing them enables you to power up in areas like strength and combos, but in practice the waves of brainless enemies are so incessant that even after you've unlocked an extensive catalogue of moves, you often find yourself pummelling \triangle , \triangle , \triangle , \triangle endlessly just to stay alive. And the puzzles – move blocks and levers, find objects to place on switches, thereby holding doors open – are so heavily recycled from other games that even *The Simpsons Game*'s send up of puzzlers did them better. Sling in the fact that Werehog acts take 20-30 minutes compared to two-ten for Sonic ones, and you have a dish that fuses limitless sadness with blind, uncontrollable rage.

Out of control

Not that the Sonic acts are without problems. While the 2.5D bits are outstanding, there aren't enough of them: *Unleashed* is predominantly 3D and suffers as a result. The game's structure encourages you to explore levels for collectibles (like sun and



► The platforming borrows from *Prince Of Persia* and *Tomb Raider* – play them, not this.

moon medallions that you have to find to open up later acts) and grab rings compulsively, but controlling Sonic from behind is so stupidly imprecise when he isn't moving at speed that just getting him to walk in a straight line is a Sisyphean task. And while the camera is much more reliable than it was in dire previous effort *Sonic The Hedgehog*, speeding round corners and dashing from side to side is still horribly disorientating.

It's hard to see who exactly Sega is looking to appeal to here. Even by Sonic's standards, the storyline is so preposterous

that you have to assume *Unleashed* is aimed at the under-12s, particularly with a disgustingly cheery purple idiot called Chip – who might be the most annoying sidekick in any game ever – hovering on your shoulder during the hub parts; yet the Werehog elements are so banal and poorly cribbed from *God Of War* that making anyone play them is like digital waterboarding. The end result is an aimless mess, albeit one that offers up tantalising glimpses of what could have been. One of the Trophies on offer here is entitled 'Still Broken', and as a two-word summary of Sonic's latest outing, it couldn't be more fitting. **Ben Wilson**



KONAMI

SUMO
DIGITAL

A Division of Foundation 9 Entertainment



Need to get away?





Toy soldiers

Crash Commando

War is hell, but also hella fun

If there's something better to do on PSN than jet-packing around cartoon-crisp platform battlegrounds squishing enemies in a dinky tank and accidentally blowing yourself to pieces with a rebounding grenade, then I haven't found it yet. Crash Commando is bright, inventive, and fast, and above all totally geared toward uncomplicated fun.

Think of it a bit like a 2D Team Fortress, with opposing teams of red and blue (Grunts and Jarheads) duking it out across scrolling, multi-tiered levels. There's no story to speak of, and only a bare bones single-player mode to occupy lonely soldiers (it's really just a 20-mission training sequence populated with bots), because the real juice is in the 12-man online multiplayer.

The whole thing is built with frantic



multi-man mayhem in mind. The physics are reminiscent of the classic Worms games – an arcade mix of bouncing bombs and rat-a-tat machine-gun fire tracing visibly across the screen. It'd be family-friendly if it wasn't for the fact that every death is marked by a fat, red explosion of meat. Actually making people dead is simple – choose a primary and secondary weapon, grab some grenades and press fire stupidly fast.

Oh what a lovely war

The only tricky thing is getting used to the slightly fiddly aiming, which takes a few matches. A blue line tracing the course of whatever you're firing – rockets, grenades, bullets – streaks out from your little man, and can be guided with the right stick. It's sensitive, but soon makes sense – especially once you've figured out which is your weapon of choice.

The default machine gun, for instance, takes a while to do serious damage but does allow for scattershot accuracy. On the other hand my favourite, the grenade launcher, has a much slower rate of fire but



Surviving for more than a minute feels like a massive achievement in the midst of all the bang.



Objective-based games are more tactical, but still end up in big, messy piles of man bits.



Vehicles kick ass, bringing fat firepower to battles, even though they only go left and right.

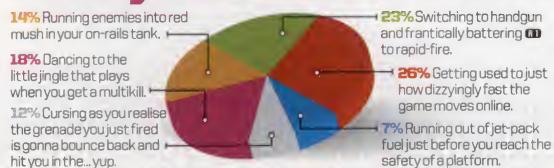
doesn't have to score a direct hit to kill – it bounces and ricochets off walls and floors, so you can pre-empt an enemy or even just fire one in his general direction and pray to the great munitions gods.

And this is where the brilliance of the jet-pack comes in. Every player can launch themselves into the air by holding **L1**, but the quickly recharging fuel gauge only lasts a few seconds. Essentially, everyone can fly, but not for long, so the battle becomes all about out-maneuvring your opponents, conserving just enough energy to zip away from their attacks, or timing a grenade so it bounces up to meet them as they're forced to descend.

There are tons of other great touches, too. The maps each have two 'sides' joined by doorways – it's still 2D, but you can see the other side in the distance and they give an impression of depth.

There are also vehicles to drive – tanks, jeeps, rockets – and loads of pickups to play tactical cat-and-mouse around, making this the best fun we've had on PSN for ages. **Nathan Ditum**

What you do in... Commando



Retro regent

Prince Of Persia Classic

Platforming royalty gets HD remake

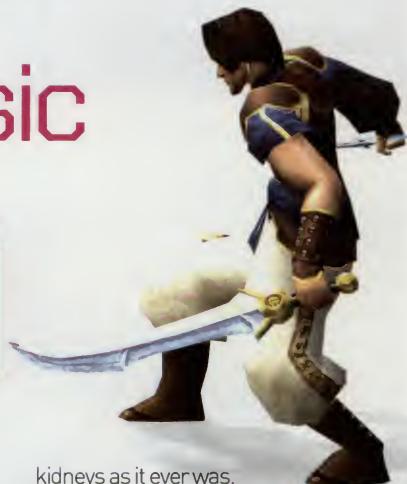
Rose-tinted specs are banned here on the forward-thinking OPM, but I secretly enjoy the punishment/purity of old games compared to the save-anywhere, hand-holding of the next-gen. Identical to the version released on XBLA early last year, this HD visual makeover of Jordan Mechner's classic side-scrolling platformer – and

▀ The original Prince Of Persia has had a Sands Of Time reskin.



inspiration for Ubisoft's modern-era POP – tries to fuse friendly and fierce. And while the results are a bit muddled, Classic is still worth the £7.99 entry fee. Just.

Reskinned in 2003's Sands Of Time livery, the Prince and his surroundings look super pretty in hi-def, complete with trademark subtle animations. He even gets a few new moves, including a nifty but largely pointless backwards somersault. Despite this, a few mid-level checkpoints and overly 'look at me!' gate triggers, however, Persia redux is as ripe with molar-grinding insta-deaths and cruel scimitars to the



kidneys as it ever was. Problem is, while the spike traps, loose tiles and blade barriers genuinely test your skill, the frustratingly leisurely combat animations and capricious parrying mean the swordfighting does little more than test your patience. To be fair, it's not a deal breaker, but with Uncharted's truly sumptuous thematic reinterpretation of Classic's traps and scraps, gameplay currently available on Amazon for a tenner, nostalgia really is the biggest draw here.

Paul Fitzpatrick



KONAMI

SUMO
DIGITAL

A Division of Foundation Entertainment

Cote D'Azur

£9.99



PlayStation.
Network

Download GTI Club+ from the PlayStation®Network for only £9.99.



I GTI Club+
RALLY COTE D'AZUR

PLAYSTATION. 3



Fiat 127 is a registered trademark owned and licensed by Fiat Group Automobiles S.p.A. Product under license. The Fiat 127, all associated logos and distinctive designs are trademarks of Fiat Group Automobiles S.p.A. All rights reserved. Volkswagen trademarks, design patents and copyrights are used with the permission of the owner Volkswagen AG. Mini Cooper II is a registered trademark of BMW AG. Licensed by Sumo Digital Ltd. GTI Club+ Rally Côte d'Azur and GTI Club+ are trademarks and registered trademarks of Konami Entertainment Co., Ltd. KONAMI is a registered trademark of KONAMI CORPORATION. Developed by Sumo Digital Ltd. PlayStation, PlayStation 3 and PlayStation Network are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.



▲ Brazil vs Argentina is known as the classico. Matches involving OPM, less so.



OPM slips to first defeat

Boss calls for 'new signings'. Interested?

Looks like it could be a rollercoaster season for the OPM FIFA 09 Online Challenge team. Having opened with a solid 2-1 victory last month, our latest performance saw us stumble to a messy 4-0 defeat at the hands of a scratch matchmaking side – us as Arsenal, them as [spit] Chelsea. Shambles might be a strong word, but how else to describe a performance which saw Robin Van Persie dismissed after four minutes following a crackerjack challenge on the halfway line (Chappers11, we may never forgive you)?

To be fair to Chappers, he wasn't the only one who saw red – Liverpool101 and our very own Nath were also dismissed, as OPM finished the game with just seven men on the pitch. A bit of a disgrace, then, although voices on the team were quick to insist that lag may have played a part.

If your team wants to take a crack at a tired, struggling OPM side then head on over to gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge to register your details. See you online. We'll be the ones in an awkward pre-match huddle.



Sign up to play our FIFA 09 side now

gamesradar.com/fifa09onlinechallenge

■ Spyro's new free-fly ability is the only significant addition.



Happy flapping

The Legend Of Spyro Dawn Of The Dragon

PSI's purple-headed monster is back. Again

What the?! How is he *still* not dead? Or grown up with a real job and a mortgage? No. In all this time, all that's happened is Spyro has gone from being a fat ball of purple living in a child-friendly fairyland to an awkward adolescent in a slightly better rendered fairyland. This time around, Spyro's world is teetering on the edge of apocalypse – but, higher stakes aside, it's the same old story. So: fun? [Drum roll]

Flight of fancy

Not hugely. The gameplay suffers from a slew of platformer problems: a sadistic camera, by-the-numbers combat and tediously traditional ledge-hopping. But the weirdest thing is that great chunks of the platforming are rendered utterly obsolete by the fact that – like Clark Kent in Smallville – Spyro's creators have finally conceded that he *has* to start flying at some point, or people will ask some tough questions. That means barring a couple of occasions where strong winds makes flight impossible, you can flap over platforms, rather than jumping like a last-gen chump.

This is a double-edged sword. Obviously, negating the purposely-built levels is madness, but flying is also really good



Info

Format PSP Pub Activision Dev Etranges Libellules Players 1-2 Web [lair.spyrothedragon.com](http://spyrothedragon.com) It's like a *CBeebies* series about dragons growing up.



■ To defeat this terrifying beast you have to... Slap his hand? Oh come on, Team Spyro.



■ Your dragon breath can be upgraded. Just drink a pot of coffee and smoke 20 Bensons.

fun. When you first spread your wings and glide out over a waterfall, skimming the breeze as uplifting strings play, it's magical. In fact, if

there was more of this, Dawn would feel like much more than just the latest in a seemingly endless line of sequels. Open world Spyro though? Maybe next time... **Kim Richards**



Japan Watch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell

Macross Ace Frontier

Format PSP Pub Bandai Namco Subtitles No

I usually base purchasing decisions for this column on how quickly IT fires off a cease and desist email once I hit the game's (normally filthy) website. But not with this PSP-flattering new mecha combat game. It features fearsome bots from the entire 26-year canon and not a flash of knicker in sight.



Ikki Tousen: Eloquent Fist

Format PSP Pub Marvelous Entertainment Subtitles No

Presumably to save cash, the developer of this anime beat-'em-up tie-in has left out much of the animation... except the disintegrating tartan skirts and exploding blouses. Not the Tekken Dark Resurrection beater we were expecting, then. Hang on, just got an urgent email from IT...



Chuomon Shiyouze! Oretachi no Sekai

Format PSP Pub Global A Entertainment Subtitles No



This clever new role-player tasks your character to build his own RPG quests, buying land, renting monsters to roam it, and hiding bejewelled trinkets in dark caves before sending unwitting fools out to their doom. Kind of like corporate retreat management with foaming mead and disembowelling.

Exotic Boxart Of The Month



Sangokushi XI with Power-Up Kit

So this is what illustrators of children's bibles get up to between jobs. Mummy, why is Jesus throwing shuriken at that man?



Devil Summoner: Kuzunoha Raidou

A genuinely effective bit of video game boxart that perfectly captures the tinderbox tension in an instant before the stabbing (or confused kissing) begins.



Umewaza Ykari no Yasashi Igo

What's more depressing: the calculated laziness of this boxart or the fact that she'll be down to her underwear before the third button press?



Command performance

Tom Clancy's Endwar

Apocalyptic conflict gets shrunk to fit

As far as strategic decisions go, setting out to evoke the *spirit* of the PS3 version's voice-controlled wargasm on PSP, rather than trying to fudge the actual technology, was the smart move. So gone is barking commands over a headset as heroic cameras swoop over military units in real-time. In its place Ubisoft has created a Clancy-themed, turn-based isometric battlefield sim that's so sternly 'reminiscent' of Nintendo's excellent Advance Wars it's quite a surprise to find the game doesn't come bundled with a clip-on second screen and touch stylus. Still, if you're going to stalk another series, it might as well be a classic.

Narratively, Endwar stands shoulder-to-shoulder with its next-gen cousin, delivering a paranoid, near-future tale of a resurgent Soviet bear playing Europe and the US off against each other to trigger World War 3. But that, and the fact that you can play as any of the three factions, is where the family



Did you know?

The Endwar novel, written by a genre hack under the pseudonym David Michaels, is actually based on Ubisoft's game rather than the other way around, and depicts events unfolding on the Canadian front of a near-future WW3.



Info

Format PSP/ETA Out now Pub Ubisoft Dev Funatics Players 1-2 Web endwargame.uk.ubi.com
It's like Playing a slightly grumpier version of Advance Wars.

resemblance ends. With no multiple satellite uplink nodes to seize or WMDs to deploy, missions no longer seesaw with the unpredictability of those in the PS3 game. Happily, though, the pumped up rock-paper-scissors gameplay and chess-like manoeuvres provide ample opportunities for strategic noodling.

Moving out

A typical skirmish will see the Europeans facing off against the Russians on a gridded map containing a neutral base.

Each 'cycle' is divided into a movement phase and an attack phase. During the first phase you advance your units, plug gaps in defences and task friendly bases to create new units. You can also deploy infantry from land, sea and air transports. There are several tactical modifiers to bear in mind, here: wooded and built-up 'squares' provide a defensive boost



Endwar on PSP wisely skips the PS3 version's tech-heavy innovations and focuses on strategy.



Combat cycles have two parts: a movement phase and an attack phase. 'Sit still, damn you!'



to infantry, heavy artillery units need a rest cycle between moving and attacking, submarines are invisible to the opposing army while in deep water, and it's possible to slow down enemy units by flanking them with your own. With movement complete you then select targets and sit back to watch the split-screen animations of your brave lads getting the upper hand, or (quite often) their asses handed back to them.

There are two elements that raise Endwar's gameplay from breezy fun to minor obsession. The first is surprisingly aggressive enemy AI that rapidly schools you in the folly of just steaming in and hoping for the best. The second is an XP system that boosts units' stats with every successful attack. So neglect any enemy unit for long and, when you finally come to fight them, you risk facing off against an elite force of battle-hardened vets rather than soft, new recruits. It's a clever touch, forcing you to keep an eye on the whole battlefield and not just emerging flashpoints. It also consolidates PSP

Endwar's status as a worthy partner to the PS3 version, rather than merely a lower-specced inferior alternative.

Paul Fitzpatrick

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

7

SingStar Abba

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Sony

 That's right, make a face at the magazine and pretend you're not interested. Abba? Abba! Like you'd be caught singing along to something so embarrassingly retro and camp. Now stick the disc in your PS3 and cycle through the songs. Go on. Note how you're helpless to prevent your foot tapping along to Gimme Gimme Gimme. Feel a lump in your throat as When All Is Said And Done plays out. See how your missus blushes for you as you stagger through Dancing Queen. And then drop the façade and belt out The Winner Takes It All like



your life depends on it. No other way is possible. In terms of doing what it says on the box, SingStar Abba simply can't be faulted – 25 massive pop songs fit for any occasion: parties, weddings, solo nights in with a nice bottle of Chardonnay and a box of Maltesers. Wait, what?

Ben Wilson

PlayStation
9

SingStar Vol 3

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Sony

 SingStar remains one of Sony's greatest success stories, but this latest collection only underlines the obsolescence of the disc-based version now that we can pick and choose from the online riches of the SingStore. Vol 3's eclectic tracklist means you'll find six or seven tracks to belt out (read: ruin) whatever your tastes, but, as a standalone disc costing 25 quid, it feels all over the place. Is a Fall Out Boy fan really going to want to sing Kate



Bush's Babooshka? Who thought Jacko's Billie Jean would sit well alongside Happy Mondays' Kinky Afro? Decent as an introduction to PS3 karaoke, otherwise stick with the Store. **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation
7

Disney Sing It

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Disney Interactive

 Say you're the suit tasked with overseeing a Disney version of SingStar. Do you do the obvious thing and retain the simple, widely understood scoring system from Sony's series? Or do you swing for the bleachers and introduce a new, Guitar Hero-style system that awards multipliers for hitting a chain of notes, thereby confusing your target audience and ensuring that winning is more down to luck than talent? Because someone (we're guessing Goofy) bafflingly decided to do the latter here. Meaning that, despite a



tracklist packed with sickeningly happy hits from Camp Rock, High School Musical, and some plastic-smiled teens you'll never have heard of, the only guarantee this brings is tears before bedtime. And that's with two adults playing... **Ben Wilson**

PlayStation
5

PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

Telepathe Dance Mother

Format Album ETA 26 Jan Price £7.99

Dreamy synthesiser pop where club beats meld with tribal rhythms and interlocking vocals in a way that ought to charm TV On The Radio fans out there – and not just because it features TV's production wizard David Sitek. myspace.com/telepathe



The Wombats Is This Christmas?

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

The Wombats join Slade in the ranks of bands with an Xmas single under their belt. Here they spruce up their anthemic punk-pop with horns and sleigh bells, but Back To The Future on TV and boozy rows make this a Yule you'll recognise. myspace.com/thewombatsuk

099



Solange Sandcastle Disco

Format Track ETA Out now Price £0.79

Beyoncé's little sis plucks this Motown-tinted pop gem from recent album Sol-Angel And The Hadley St Dreams. Sol hasn't quite got the imperious, fembot delivery of her sister, but makes up for it here with her sunny, soft delivery over a breezy '60s-influenced pop stomp. myspace.com/solange



Download of the month The Bronx

Format Album ETA 19 Jan Price £7.99

The third self-titled album from LA's The Bronx might be their best yet: 11 tracks of gnarled, punk rock fury brought up the hard way. No messing with frontman Matt Caughran, either, a tattooed screamer with brains to match his brawn. myspace.com/thebronx



Blob army

Locoroco 2

Who ate all the fruit?



Info

Format PSP ETA
Out now Pub
Sony Dev SCE
Studios Japan
Players 1-4 Web
snipurl.com/5ey0a
It's like Trying to
take a bin liner full
of jelly for a walk.

Welcome to the epicentre of cuteness. This is a game where a singing blob hops on chubby penguins, floats on dandelions and rides clouds through the sky. If they found a way to make pandas the size of hamsters and then dressed them up in little bonnets, it still wouldn't be as cute as Locoroco 2.

But underneath this sequel's soft and cuddly exterior lies an addictive puzzler. The basic setup hasn't changed. Your little blob jumps around a magical land, eating red fruits to add extra blobs to increase its size, while taking on the evil Mojabs – creatures who look like big

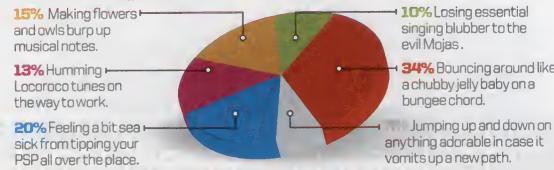
scribbles. Sounds ferociously Japanese? Don't worry, once in your hands it's surprisingly easy to get involved with.

Part of the original Locoroco's success was down to its thicko-proof controls – and they haven't been tampered with. So you navigate your way around the slopes, pools, drops and spiky hazards with three simple buttons: the two shoulder buttons and \odot . The shoulders tip the world left and right – hold them down and your Locoroco bounces upwards. Hit \odot and it will split apart into tiny separate blobs or recombobulate into a single monster sphere again. And being Locorocos, they make a funny noise while they're doing it. In fact, they make funny noises all the time, singing happy nonsense songs until you feel like you're watching CBeebies with Blake Fielder-Civil.

clouds and terrorising the Locoroco world. In each stage the only goal is to get to the end, but along the way you'll clean up the clouds, find Miu Miu men (tiny folk who live alongside the Locorocos) and bash Mojabs. There are collectables, like the Locoroco currency of pickories, and musical notes that can 'level up' stages so they have more goodies scattered around. You find different coloured Locorocos too, who each have their own style of song.

It might sound like a walk in the hallucinogenic park, but the right path isn't always obvious. There are secret areas where you can pick up extra pickories or fruits, and you'll need to experiment to find new routes. Want to

What you do in... Locoroco 2



Cleaning crew

The premise is as simple as the controls. Mojabs are polluting everything with dark





► Bounce on everything you can find to unlock new routes.



► You know the old saying... time flies when you're a tiny, singing lump of joy.

reach that high platform? You'll have to hop up and down on that stripy elephant-like creature until it spews rainbows from its trunk. Obviously. Or you'll come across parts to attach to your Locoroco. I bounced on the top of what looked like a smiling piece of broccoli, and then used its head to crash through some rocks. All this and you need to look out for enemies. As well as the Mojabs, there are carnivorous plants that live in the jungle levels, spikes to avoid, and bosses to battle via the medium of strategic bouncing. It's a rich enough world to keep you playing right up until the end, at which point you'll want another go to see what you missed first time round.

Mini adventures

And that's just the main show. There are some brilliant mini-games to uncover as you play. Like the Locoroco-infested version of whack-a-mole, or Loco Chuppa, where bird-like creatures spit



► Just us, or is the snowman channelling Danny Day-Lewis in There Will Be Blood?

you through the level. The only one that felt pointless was a racing game – you couldn't participate, just bet on the outcome. It felt like watching a screensaver and I got bored after ten seconds. Why not just let me race?

So, there's not much change to the original Locoroco formula, but when it comes to something as original as this, there doesn't need to be. There are a few tweaks – the 25 levels felt a little tougher than the first game's, and a little crazier, like when you're moving through the insides of a giant sleeping penguin. It's enough to make it feel new and shiny again, and well worth buying. Plus: singing blobs! What's not to like?

Rachel Penny



BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



The Matrix Trilogy

Director Larry and Andy Wachowski
Starring Keanu Reeves **ETA** Out now
The Matrixes (Matrices?) in all their inconsistency. The first one is still amazing – full of men in leather having teenage existential dramas, but full of *incredible* action scenes. The other two have even more action, but are drowned in ballbag philosophising.



Planet Of The Apes Boxset

Director Various **Starring** Charlton Heston, Roddy McDowall **ETA** Out now
Everything except the rubbish Mark Wahlberg remake is here – the still good but definitely aging original, the brilliantly bleak anti-nuke Beneath The Planet Of The Apes, the so-so Escape From The Planet Of The Apes and the trailing off a bit Conquest and Battle.



Hellboy 2

Director Guillermo del Toro **Starring** Ron Perlman, Selma Blair **ETA** Out now
Bigger and better supernatural sequel. Not only does Hellboy have to stop a creepy ancient prince – from '80s pop band Bros, eek! – wacking his mega army, but he's having relationship issues with Selma Blair's beautifully spiky Liz. A bit like The Hills then, only with weird things in jars and spontaneous combustion.



Movie of the month

The Dark Knight

Director Christopher Nolan **Starring** Christian Bale, Heath Ledger **ETA** Out now

The best blockbuster since forever. Drowned in hype and expectation, maybe the most surprising thing about The Dark Knight is that it lives up to pretty much all of it: Ledger really *is* Oscar good as the Joker, and even for jaded 21st Century audiences the action is un-frigging-believable. A must must must have.



Snarling beasts like Lenny here appear mid-pounce, from nowhere.



Furred-person shooter

Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2009

Kicking Mother Nature's ass since 1998

The lioness begins to go cold at my feet, a high-velocity bullet hole between her sad eyes, as Dangerous Hunts proves that porn isn't the only hollow thrill you can have in which hard-faced men with bad moustaches perform reprehensible acts linked by an irrelevant plot and zero-budget production values. By any reasonable criteria, this is a bag of balls. The graphics are emphatically below the best that PS2 can achieve, while the gameplay stutters and lurches with an unpredictability that suggests it's being finished frantically, live, and piped down the broadband as you play. And bear in mind, this is coming from someone who has no problem with Dangerous Hunts' subject matter whatsoever. Oh, grow up. Assuming you've played your fair share of games, you've probably shot,



Info

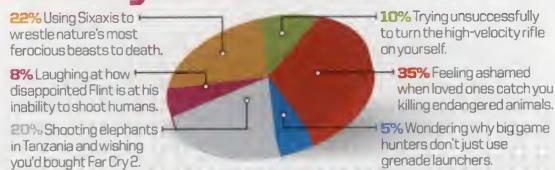
Format: PS3 ETA: US Import: Pub: Activision Dev: Sand Grain Studios Players: 1 Web: cabelaegames.com It's like Waking up one morning to discover you're a redneck survivalist. With cataracts.

exploded, flayed and mashed enough virtual *humans* to fill the Millennium Stadium twice over, so if the thought of shooting jaguars out of trees gets you all squeamish, then you're lost to me.

Fur cry

No, the frustration comes from playing a game that doesn't seem to realise that it's squandering one of the most original, untapped videogame experiences out there. Whereas other first-person shooters tend to cast you as the prey – the lone warrior facing long odds against an enemy with superior weaponry – Dangerous Hunts does the opposite. So where other shooters routinely send peril your way, this plonks you in a wilderness with an elusive (but deadly) quarry to track and take down. Pick up its tracks and you're forced to cover your own as you stalk it through the countryside. Make a noise, let your scent carry downwind and it's all for nothing. And even if you do these things successfully, unless your eye is good, you risk blundering onto Gentle Ben,

What you do in... CBH 2009



Ironically, if you're really good at this game, this is as exciting as the graphics get. Lucky you.



In an attempt to up the thrills the game offers a series of arenas packed with nature's nutters.



"Now just remember, Flint, he's much more scared of you than you are of – not the neck!"

say, and getting slashed, bitten or trampled underfoot. Admit it: if this were turned into an inverted stealth game, with you, a guard, carefully, cautiously hunting an enemy spy around a military base, it'd be incredible. Or at least not as awful.

However, oblivious to this stealthy germ of brilliance in its lap, the developer has instead opted to amp the hell out of the hunting. And so you get tons of hysterically awful quick-time melee fights – I've wrestled more hairy beasts than Triple H – and a stupendously wrong-brained attempt at a plot that sees your hunter – Flint Abrahams – rescuing the passengers of a downed plane from piranhas and jaguars, killing the entire cast of The Lion King as it menaces a Safari camp, and generally saving a jaw-dropping succession of national stereotypes from their own wildlife. It is, in short, all sorts of wrong. And yet, well, let's just say I've mailed our

copy to Hideo Kojima, so if Metal Gear Solid 5 turns out to be the best game of the decade you'll know who to thank, right?

Paul Fitzpatrick





■ Making fighting robots dull should be impossible. It's not.

Robot bores

Armored Core For Answer

Not the answer we were looking for

And so we bid a weary 'hello, again' to the seemingly endless Armored Core series and its less than red hot bot-on-bot action. Thirteenth time around, little has changed since PS1 was in its prime. You track enemies on your radar until you get a weapon lock, fire until greeted with a messy explosion, then zoom off and repeat. And that's about it. It's mixed with some bigger battles against vast enemy forts, and there's some gladiatorial one-on-one action to be had against rival mech pilots. But however dressed up things are, it's impossible to get past the fact that the combat just isn't very interesting, which is a big minus given that the game revolves around *giant flying robots* tearing panels off each other.

Mech daddy

It's not even technically impressive. The environments don't feel like they were designed so much as modelled using Duplo bricks in a sandpit. Worse still, for a game in which there's usually precious little going on, it's got a bogglingly tightfisted framerate – which is particularly disastrous for the target lock-on.

Weirdly, while the gameplay stagnates, the mech customisation options are excellent. It's sort of like a Gundam version of Gran Turismo, with tons of weapons, body parts and



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now
Pub Ubisoft Dev From Software Players 1-2 Web snipurl.com/6wmBn It's like
The machines are trying to bore us into submission.



■ The game often feels like having a migraine while scaffolding falls about your ears.



■ Once you've created your bespoke death droid you've seen the best of Armored Core, accessories available. You really can build a unique murderbot, with every last detail tweaked to your personal specifications – 'Hrm, twin plasma cannons in raspberry, I think'. It's properly absorbing too. So much so

that you're likely to spend far, far longer building than you are fighting. As endorsements go, that's like buying a car because you'll enjoy changing its spark plugs.

Dave Houghton



Straight to bargain bin

With **Nathan Ditum**



Getting angry at **Bratz: Girlz Really Rock** is a bit like that woman in the parable being cross at the snake for biting her. Yes, it's a frost-hearted vision of hell as an endless popularity contest for teenage girls swathed in pink clothes and cheap makeup with freakishly identical bodies that will be utterly impossible for its impressionable target audience to reconcile with real life. What did you expect?

And gameplay wise, yes, it's a broken heap of idiot physics and horribly misconceived mini-games. But again, it was always going to be this way. Equally, though, I bloody hate snakes, and I've also got a two year-old daughter, and I'm sick of having to swat this kind of exploitative rubbish away from her like fat seagulls on Brighton beach. In short, not my game of the year.

By contrast, the ever-expanding stable of horsey games on PS2 (I nearly got four in this month, and was going to rename the column 'Straight to the knacker's yard') feels wholesome, educational, and sternly reassuring like wearing a pair of one-size-too-small jodhpurs. Like Girlz Really Rock, these games are also aimed at young girls, but less in a 'spend all your money in Accessorize' sort of way and more in a 'you love ponies and you can stroke one in this slightly shabby game' way. Just like **Tim Stockdale's Riding Star**, which is totally unremarkable in terms of graphics, handling and everything else, but does let you ride a horse along a shore by a lighthouse under a grey sky beside lush green hills. Sigh.



Less good ('good' being deeply relative here) is **Clever Kids Pony World**, which doesn't let you ride a horse at all. Instead, it's a weird quiz hosted by a floating robot head that consists of slightly disturbing jigsaws ('See if you can put this Shetland Pony back together...' 'Mummy!') and questions about the differences between a Welsh Cob and a Welsh Mountain Pony (the answer? One of them is drawn ever so slightly more like a sanatorium inmate's therapeutic watercolour than the other). All of which is pleasantly educational, but rendered maddeningly unplayable because the floaty robot greets every transition to a new screen with a fresh ejaculation of whirring beeps and squeaks, which sound like a liquored-up R2-D2 on his way home from a lock-in.



Abomination of the month

The most depressing thing about **Margot's Word Brain** – apart from the fact it only includes six games, all of which could be played on a mobile phone or, in the event of a prolonged power cut or you living in the past, on paper – isn't that it made me feel stupid, but exactly how it managed to do so. Of the six games on offer I got scores in the low hundreds for the five that represent traditional, sedate mental exercises – stuff like word searches, anagrams and Scrabble-like word runs. Then I got over four thousand points on the clearly-just-put-into-the-game-so-grandma-doesn't-win-every-round HyperTxt, which simply asks you to spell words on a mobile phone interface. I mean, Jesus. I could've been somebody.



Horde game

Burn Zombie Burn

Still sad about Left 4 Dead? Try these PSN rot-bags

Speedy or slow? That's the question tearing apart the zombie-loving community right now. Traditionalists argue that the classic zombie shuffle is timeless – clumsy but

relentless; a terrifying metaphor for the decrepitude that awaits us all. Modernists reckon that zombies are like broadband internet – once you've seen how fast things can move, you can't ever go back. Burn Zombie Burn neatly resolves this dispute by providing both in its Super Smash TV-style arcade chaos.

The vast majority of its walking dead are your basic Romero-era shufflers: arms outstretched, easy cannon fodder. Occasionally, though, you get a sprinter come out of the pack without warning, and by golly you'd better be ready with the shotgun. There's also a neat dilemma at the heart of the game: whatever else you're packing, you've always got a flamethrower, which you can use to scare uncooked zombies away, set whole packs of them ablaze, or create cunning traps with flaming scenery. This makes high scores easier, but also makes the



Setting zombies on fire is more like stress relief than gaming. The repetitiveness of it is enough to turn you into a zombie.

Info

Format PSN ETA Out now **Pub**
Pinnacle Dev Doublesix **Players 1-2**
Web burnzombieburn.com It's like
Being a pyromaniac in a graveyard.

burning zombies faster and more aggressive. The game's basically a running battle to keep their numbers manageable – even the slow ones can overwhelm you if you're cornered.

The trouble is, this gets old fairly fast. Lawnmowers and explosives keep things going for a bit, and ridiculous moments help – sometimes whole waves of zombies come at you wearing tutus – but after you've ploughed your way through the first 600 you might as well have slaughtered a million. All it's really done is made us even sadder about the lack of Left 4 Dead on PS3. As for the fast vs slow crowd? We're not dead set on either. **Joel Snape**



Novastrike

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Tiki Games

This low-rent top-down alien blaster doesn't even seem to be trying. Its looks are so-so – flat blue oceans punctuated by muddy green islands – the shooting feels flabby and inaccurate and the missions play like a list of chores. Your objectives tend to be either 'blow up some ships' or, in a daring change of pace, 'blow up some buildings'. Not only is your tiny Scythe craft massively outclassed by faster and sturdier enemies, but your dreary guns take aeons to upgrade to anything close to spectacular. Even the allied ships that drop in to help you look embarrassed to be seen with your bulky ass. If you're desperate for some arcade-style

shooting, spend your shiny dollars on Super Stardust HD instead. **Rachel Penny**



Spin Jam

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony

A puzzle relic so inane it makes Tetris seem like a serious take on Soviet architecture. Here it's your job to destroy a flower by firing coloured sticky bubbles towards its spinning centre. Three or more bunched together fly off, carrying any attached odd-coloured bubbles with them, and smash into the flower's petals. The aim is to get rid of as many petals as possible, in the hope your gibbering cartoon opponent will give in, though it's more likely your will to live will go first. The petals regenerate over time, which only serves to underline the inherent pointlessness of the whole endeavour. As an added bonus, you can play a

no-pressure, opponent-free version and be bored as well as baffled. **Rachel Penny**

Need For Speed Undercover

Format PSP **ETA** Out now **Pub** EA

It's the also-ran double whammy for the latest Need For Speed as Midnight Club LA trounces it first on PS3 and now on PSP. The culprits this time? Barge-like handling and joyless backgrounds. Pass.

5 Paul Fitzpatrick



Crash Bandicoot 3 Warped

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony

Retro tiger riding, dinosaur baiting and crate smashing. Still basically good fun – what game featuring a mango-eating time traveller hero isn't? – but only in a really, really old game with creaky platforming and super-linear level design sort of way.

5 Rachel Penny

Theme Park

Format PSN download **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony

I remember this as a tightly designed management game that packed fairground fun and a basic education about the economy into a vibrant cartoon world. Maybe it still is, but it's so lost underneath clumsy controls and badly rendered sick that you'll never find it. There are still rides to build, staff to hire and toilets to carefully position, but actually doing it is a menu-flapping nightmare and the difficulty curve can ruin you in seconds as rides break down and toilet queues build up. Then the staff slack off, the banks refuse your loans and all the time a buffoon is shouting at you to raise ticket prices WITHOUT EVER TELLING YOU

3 Rachel Penny HOW! Save the memories and your pennies, by ignoring this relic. **Rachel Penny**



PUT THESE FORMS OF TRANSPORT IN ORDER FROM SLOWEST TO FASTEST

5/10

WALKING (A)

CYCLING (B)

DRIVING (C)

FLYING (D)

A tough question when you factor in airport delays, lost luggage...

400
1200
COWBOY

Intelligent design

Buzz! Brain Bender

PSP quiz chases the Brain Training crowd

So right now I've got the same brain power as Henry the hoover, but I'm hoping to work my way up to a tumble dryer any day now. What am I talking about? Buzz's new twist on the brain training cleverness gauge, which sees it measuring your little grey cells in terms of kilojoules (and electrical appliances) instead of IQ or age.

The idea is you play games to exercise your brain in four ways: analysis, observation, calculation and memory. As with Buzz! Master Quiz on PSP, this is mostly designed for one person, with a series of multiple choice questions appearing on the left, and possible answers on the right mapped to the handheld's face buttons. Correct answers raise your kilojoules while trophies reward perfect rounds and winning streaks. There's a pass the PSP mode for six players to enjoy, too, in the unlikely event you're into competitive algebra.

Bright spark

Presentation-wise it's a mixed bag. Jason Donovan's inane presenter berk seems at odds with the whole self-improvement angle (Nintendo gets a proper Japanese doctor, we get Joseph and his Technicolor lab coat). But then sometimes the balance tips the other way, and the game strays a little too close to maths lessons for comfort, such as when the questions are about fractions instead of mini-game memory tests.



Rachel Penny



Ignore the lab coat, he's still a total twerp.



Prove to mates that, yes, you are a swot.

They might be represented in pie and pizza slices, but they're still boring.

The whole thing only takes an hour to finish, but the point is you're supposed to play once a day to give your ever-shrinking intellect a regular workout. What you'll actually do is skip the boring options and go for the memory puzzles and sound

games, because they're fun and fast. It won't make you Einstein, but it has to be better for your aching mind than playing another urban racer.

Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest

50 Cent: Blood On The Sand

Skate 2

Burn Zombie Burn

Rag Doll Kung Fu

Bolt

Hail To The Chimp

Red Faction Guerrilla

Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon

Killzone 2

Street Fighter IV

Damnation

FEAR 2: Project Origin

The Godfather II

Rise Of The Argonauts

Silent Hill Homecoming

Wheelman

Heroes Over Europe

Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising

Resident Evil 5

Resistance Retribution

Rock Revolution

The Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena

Tom Clancy's Hawx

UFC 2009 Undisputed

Wanted Weapons Of Fate

Watchmen

WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania

inFamous

Batman Arkham Asylum

Bayonetta

Borderlands

DC Universe Online

Ghostbusters

God Of War III

Gran Turismo 5

Mafia II

MAG

Prototype

The Agency

Aliens Colonial Marines

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

EA

THQ

EA

Pinnacle

Sony

Disney

Gamecock

THQ

Sony

Capcom

Codemasters

Warner Bros

EA

Codemasters

Konami

Midway

Atari

Codemasters

Capcom

Sony

Konami

Atari

Ubisoft

THQ

Warner Bros

THQ

Sony

Take Two

SOE

Atari

Sony

Sega

Take Two

SOE

Sony

■ Making levels involves stacking plants and buildings in order that they can be burnt and exploded. Not the begonias!



Torcher garden

Far Cry 2

In Africa the multiplayer is a case of safari, so good



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Ubisoft Dev Ubisoft Montreal Players 1-16 Web farcry.ubi.com It's like Playing soldiers in your garden with your ex-SAS uncle.

Far Cry 2's online level editor feels like what might happen if Ross Kemp stopped meeting gangs and joined the Ground Force team – out with organic pest control, and in with a .50 cal machine gun turret mounted on the water feature. This, then, is Ultimate Ground Force – a customisable garden of flimsy cover, explosive material, and surprisingly expansive plants.

The usual multiplayer modes are all here: Capture The Diamonds switches flags for shiny stones, and Uprising is your basic VIP-based squad setup. This familiarity can make FC2 seem like Call Of Duty 4's pyromaniac little brother –

the grizzled mercs of Far Cry can take more punishment than their special forces counterparts, but veterans of COD will feel at home, dashing for cover, popping exposed targets as they go. It's the level creation that sets Far Cry 2 apart from other shooters though; the ability to create your own virtual world, right down to each individual shrub. And then blow it to tiny pieces.

Green fingers

Loading up the map editor for the first time is daunting – sandbox has never been a more appropriate term, because virgin levels are barren like the desert wastes of Africa. Once the basics of altering terrain and placing objects have been mastered, you'll begin to feel like you're rewriting Genesis with the help of Alan Titchmarsh and Andy McNab. It's a huge undertaking, but if you devote enough time to the map editor you can create almost anything you can imagine. Post-industrial jungle

junkyard? Check. War-torn shanty town? Check. Bob Ross-style happy little forest? Er, sort of. By comparison, fiddling with crates in Halo 3's Forge has all the creative potential of a half-empty bucket of Lego.

In a clear statement of incendiary intent, an entire section of the map editor is dedicated just to explosives. Far Cry 2's destructible environments are a big deal both on and offline – foliage can be shredded with gunfire, a tossed Molotov will consume swathes of verdant jungle, and a well placed barrel of rocket fuel next to your tin shack will literally blow your cover when the bullets start flying. All of which adds a huge tactical element to the map creation process – you'll have to factor in not only what to put into your level, but what you'll allow players to blow back out again, and how the level will function when they do.

Taking a finished level online for the first time is a genuine rush, and Far

What you do in... Far Cry 2





▲ The range of options is overwhelming at first. Pretty much all the time, actually.



▲ The biggest challenge is stopping your level from looking like a sandpit. Big green trees help.

Cry's feedback system will tell you what others think of your efforts. The only problem is that, like in LittleBigPlanet, if your creation doesn't get recognition fast enough it'll quickly slide down the seemingly endless list of custom levels on offer. For the most part these other levels are rubbish – nothing more than flat, grey cubes with all the buildings in a straight line, like Milton Keynes but with assault trucks for buses. But the level of creativity on a select few is so staggering you'll spend more time sightseeing than shooting – like one we downloaded called Millennium Falcon, in which a devoted Star Wars fan has recreated the Tatooine space port Mos Eisley, along with a detailed and near-perfect replica of Han Solo's spaceship, which you can even go inside (inside!).

The sheer depth may be the biggest problem for most casual users, though. It takes hours to create something special, and you'll want to

make sure it plays properly before you publish it, lest one of your fellow gamers gets stuck in a hole and gives you a duff rating. There's also the niggling feeling that even if you spend hours perfecting your masterpiece, it still won't play as well as a level designed by the experts. It's what they get paid for, after all. The maps do have to pass a series of validation checks before they can be published but there's still plenty of scope for getting it very wrong. Spawn points, team bases and weapons can all unbalance the game if they're scattered about at random. This adds a sense of unpredictability to the multiplayer maps that some might welcome, but many will feel that level design is something best left to the professionals. Those who do persevere though, will discover

that, thanks to Far Cry 2, getting creative with your gunplay is no longer the preserve of the PC community. And that has to be a good thing.

Matt Elliott



Online round-up

With **Leon Hurley**



Sometimes you play a game online and it's just not your night. You get trounced and battered at every turn, suffering abject humiliation at the hands of people who are probably younger and definitely better than you. **Endwar** is a lot like that, only in slow

motion. Deploying troops, forming strategies and moving around the map is full of suspense – the gradual build of tension is exciting even when you're shouting like a contestant on 'The World's Most Disobedient Tank'. Shame none of my strategies work, though. Admittedly I only have two: "Attack!" or "Retreat!" but you'd think the first one would get the occasional freak result. Apparently not.

On paper **007 Quantum Of Solace** sounds great. COD-flavoured multiplayer with a Rainbow Six Vegas-style cover system; perks in the form of gadgets that either upgrade existing abilities or add new ones, plus some clever game modes – like one player as Bond against everyone else. It just has no sparkle. Instead it feels like someone's cut all the best bits out of some other games, stitched it all together and then screamed "It's alive!" despite all evidence to the contrary. Playing Daniel Craig is only slightly more exciting than switching the machine on in the first place and once that's passed you're left with a slower, blander version of Call Of Duty.



107



After all the hype about the CGI trailer I'm actually holding the pad in my hands, playing the **Killzone 2 Beta**, and I still don't believe it's real. Nothing should look this good, especially online. I've played finished games that strip out all the pretty and still strop off in a laggy hissy fit if more than three players show up. It's a weighty, meaty shooter online with guns like tubes full of angry thunder. My only issue is the stupid decision to activate precision aim by clicking the right stick – it's unusable. You can change it to **□** but it's still 'click on, click off' rather than a more instinctive 'hold and release'. Note to Guerrilla – please change it.

Download of the month

I'm starting to regret saving all those Little Sisters. Sweet angelic children my ass. In the **Bioshock Challenge Rooms** (£6.29) they're just trouble magnets, hell bent on rushing off into whatever danger they can find – rooms full of enemies (a level called The L1 In Team) or the top of a broken Ferris wheel that needs its power restored (A Shocking Turn Of Events). And Mr Bubbles isn't around to help this time because I killed him. Admittedly Worlds Of Hurt, the other room, is just full of Splicers to fight but I'm sure it's a Lil' Sister's fault somewhere along the line. But, that said, this is an excellent addition to Bioshock, creating an evening's worth of fresh, exciting challenges that make a return to Rapture well worth the fee.



mail@opm



Yet more LittleBigLove, complaining about Christmas, a bargain hunter writes and a quick Brothers In Arms reader review.

Drought defences

I hate the way that games have their own little season in which all the good stuff comes out – I’m already saving some games for the next drought. Two months ago I was sat here bored stupid of Soulcalibur IV, but now I have Fallout 3, Dead Space, Far Cry 2 and Motorstorm: Pacific Rift to do before Resistance 2 and LittleBigPlanet, Mirror’s Edge and tons of others. To hell with it, I say! I’m saving Dead Space and Motorstorm 2 for when I’m bored out of my head in a few months’ time. Have you noticed the whole ‘no

From PlayStation hopes and fears to technical queries, this is the place to come for answers

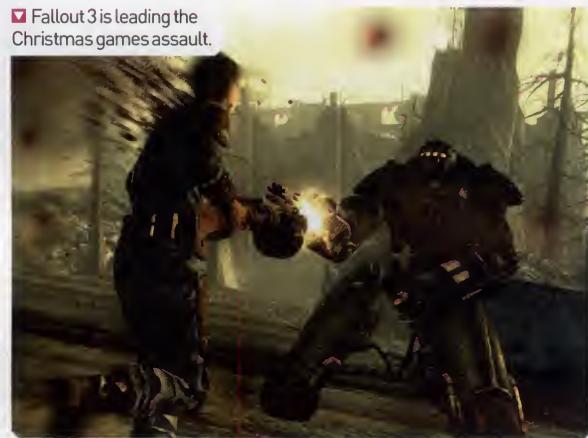
Email us at opm@futurenet.com or write to Letters, OPM, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

games... no games... no games... TONS OF GAMES... no games’ thing?

Jordan Wray, by email

Christmas, as Bono and celebrity friends poignantly noted, is a time of dread and fear. And with more AAA games around than there are donkeys in mangers, none of us have the time or cash to play them all. Our advice? Go for stuff like Fallout 3 and Dead Space first, before they’re ruined by spoilers, then lock yourself away for a massive LBP session just as the first apocalyptic family row kicks off, and head for the sunnier (but shootier) climes of Far Cry 2 just as the snow starts to fall.

▀ Fallout 3 is leading the Christmas games assault.



Tell us what's on your hard drive! Email us at opm@futurenet.com

What's on my hard drive



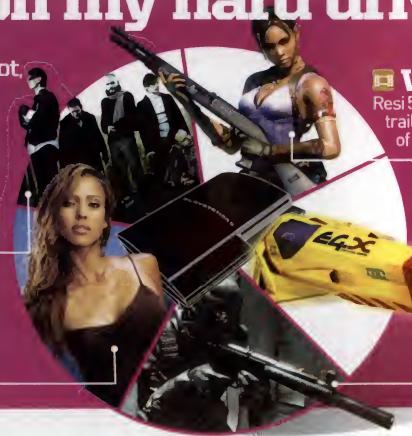
Kenneth Talbot,
Manchester

Music

Everything from Rammstein to Frank Sinatra, with a little happy hardcore thrown in, too.

Photo

Me and mates, dozens of game and film wallpapers, tattoo designs and a healthy amount of female celebrity pics.



Video

Resi 5 and Tomb Raider trailers, random episodes of Family Guy.

Game

Everything currently on the Store. Faves: Wipeout HD, Siren and the demented Linger In Shadows.

Friends

Random online chums, a few PS3-owning mates and FIFA buddies from work, Dynamo Kebab FTW!

levels and new contraptions. LittleBigPlanet really does collect all your little thoughts and ideas, and it also passes the time as I fall asleep in maths.

Steve James, by email

If LittleBigPlanet had been around during our forced march through the education system we would have spent the days doodling Da Vinci-style contraptions rather than violent revenge fantasies about the PE teacher with the wandering eye. Da Vinci used Tipp-Ex, right? Have a subscription to Official PlayStation Magazine to help keep you awake.

Interplanetary love

When I was about 12 I had a recurring dream that I was playing the best game I’d ever laid eyes on – it had been made in gaming heaven. And now my dreams have been answered with LBP. Sonic and Mario stand aside, because little sackboy needs room for all the levels currently being made. There’s always something new to play and pull apart and put back together again. Sackboy is the starting point of my great career as a semi-pro games developer without all the complicated code to memorise. My only problem now is what to make first! Roll on LittleBigPlanet 2.

William Parker, by email

LittleBigPlanet really is an incredible piece of work. A side effect of spending so much time in its Create mode over the last few weeks is that we've now come to realise that game design isn't all cigars, champagne and improbably high Metacritic scores. In fact it's really, *really* hard. As a result we're now working our way through a very long list of apology letters to the unsung talents behind all the sub-5/10 games we've brutalised over the years. "Dear Baja: Edge Of Control..."

Glory hunter

I came to the Uncharted party fashionably late, buying it a few months after it was released. It's such a great game I never thought I'd put it down, but after I'd finished 64% of it COD4 landed on my doorstep and took over my life. All the while Uncharted was gathering dust and every time I thought about going back and playing it I was put off by the fact I'd forgotten most of the plot and the controls. Then suddenly these little things called Trophies came along and Uncharted supported them. Now a new lease of life was brought to the game! Since then I've completed it and have the silverware to show for it, all thanks to the introduction of the Trophy system, without which I'm not sure I'd have ever gone back and would have missed out on the great game and story. So that's why I like Trophies! I feel sorry for those who completed it before the firmware update and have to do it all again.

Ross Betts, by email

Beware the Trophy addiction. One minute you're just finding a few extra treasures on the jungle floor, next thing you're playing any piece of tat kid's game for shiny virtual cups.

Bargain bin dipper

It never ceases to amaze me just how cheap PS2 games have become, with only rarities like Zone Of The Enders 2 selling for anything like a sensible price. Splinter Cell for a penny? Sold, I say! You should feature these bargain games in the mag – maybe a possible PlayStation Legends replacement? The same decrease in price happened to PS1 titles years back, but it's better this time round, because there are more quality games on the sixth-generation console than on the fifth. So in between big PS3 releases we can all enjoy a cheap romp we never got around to before. Joy of joys!

Ciaran McConville, by email



▀ Elena doesn't want you to get the 'Kissy Face' Trophy.

Ask SONY

Q Will all my old PSP accessories work with the new PSP 3000?

A All your peripherals for the PSP 2000 can be used with the new PSP 3000, except for the cradle/stand.

Q Brothers In Arms is a thinker not a fighter. Do not want.

A nice idea, were it not for the fact our HD-attuned eyes now reject anything in standard definition like a hastily transplanted pig's heart. Still, we'd be interesting in hearing any other ideas for how to beat the Credit Cataclysm.

Hella weak

I was recently having my afternoon session of intellectual reading, armed with no less than half a piece of cheesy toast and the very latest copy of Official PlayStation Magazine, and I found myself at the absolute abomination Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway. After a quick harrumph and ruffling of the magazine I gave it a second read, and then found myself staring in absolute astonishment at how cheap the game looked. I then decided to investigate further and watch the trailer... my suspicions were correct. My question is this: 'How can a huge games publisher like Ubisoft let a game be released that looks like it's been excreted out the back end of a penguin?'

I do understand that the game's developer Gearbox has ported games like Half-Life and Counter Strike (both classics), but I just don't think the Brothers In Arms series has the cojones to stand up to the likes of Call Of Duty and Medal Of Honor. I am genuinely disappointed – for me it's the same as The History Channel: Battle For The Pacific.

Ben Reid, by email

Cease fire, soldier. We actually gave Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway a partially positive 7/10 salute. It certainly can't match Call Of Duty for sheer punch, but there may be players out there who are keen to sample the more cerebral, squad-based mechanics of Gearbox's game? More cerebral? Anyone?

Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group

Dead Space

"So far I have screamed out loud about 30 times and I'm only just starting the third level."

Joe McLachlan

Lara lethargy

"I just feel there's only so much raiding tombs and shooting things as a sex goddess that one can do."

Richard Mead

Tache tease

"I was nicknamed 'Big Boss' in school because of my facial hair and loved every minute of it."

Kevin Nolan

Leet speak

"IAVHNSIWROTFLOL WMPIAC... I am very happy now so I will roll on the floor laughing out loud with my p*** in a clamp."

Christopher Larsson

Awful joke

"I got christened with a flamethrower – that was a baptism of fire. Still, the vicar was wearing a gorilla suit, which was a blessing in disguise."

Ian Wilson

Woo woe

"That's enough woo-ing for one night, don't you think? It's not even past watershed!"

Jen Stunt

Ball games

"I am the king teabagger. It's in no way childish."

Stewie Hitchcock

Send your questions to:
opm@futurenet.com



PS3 Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



Platformer

LittleBigPlanet

Unleash your inner Miyamoto by creating and sharing your own levels online using the brilliantly simple but canyon-deep editing tools in Sony's phenomenal platformer. Absolutely essential.

10 Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule

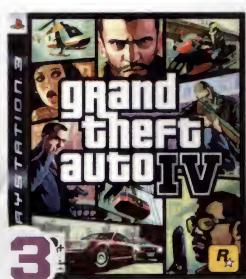


Shooter

Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare

The SAS and US Marines invite you to fight the war on terror as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a modern-day setting. A beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

10 Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



Action

Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

10 Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



Stealth

Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

10 Pub Konami
Dev Konami Productions

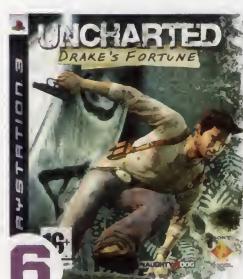


Platformer

Bioshock

Epic first-person adventure set in a ruined underwater city that combines brilliant genetic weapons with beautiful design, tons of atmosphere, and a genuinely affecting story.

10 Pub 2K Games
Dev 2K Marin



Action-Adventure

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and physical puzzling. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog



Shooter

Resistance 2

A sequel that masterfully surpasses the original. Nathan Hale returns to fight bigger aliens on American soil and delivers on gameplay, guns and polish.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac



Platformer

Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac



Music

SingStar

Sony's much-loved karaoke game steps up to next-gen with a neater interface, online options and tons of tunes via SingStore. Outkast's Hey Ya and Killers' Mr Brightside are highlights.

9 Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios London



Action-RPG

Fallout 3

The natural successor to Oblivion's RPG throne plays out in a post-apocalyptic America with Liam Neeson as your AWOL dad. An epic adventure without the self-indulgent sprawl.

9 Pub Bethesda Softworks
Dev Bethesda Game Studios

PS3 Sidekicks



Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction

Mis-manufactured battlebot Clank is the dry, logical yin to Ratchet's heroic yang.



Prince Of Persia

The prince's lovely new squeeze – Eliza – is a barely-dressed magical princess. Would, obviously.



GTA IV

Niko's idiot cousin Roman tempts our hero to Liberty City with his BS, then things really go south...



Half-Life 2

Surveys show Gordon Freeman's softly spoken sidekick Alyx is the character lonely gamers are most likely to fall in love with.

Team Choice



Fallout 3

Whether I'm gleefully lasering super mutants until their heads pop off or chatting to mutants in the post-apocalyptic side quests, this is my new favourite way to spend the entire weekend.

Rachel Penny
Agenda editor

Power

Custom silicon harnesses crisp HD, ear-splitting audio, multi-processor might, and Blu-ray to deliver pure gaming perfection.



Connectivity

USB slots to plug in your motion-sensing Sixaxis pads and many other devices.

Online

Surf the net, message friends and download movies, music and expansion packs, plus demos and games from the PlayStation Store.



11

Action

Mirror's Edge

A real Marmite game. We loved it for the thrill of leaping across the glistening rooftops of a suspiciously perfect future city while pursued by trigger-happy cops. Idiots, meanwhile, didn't.

9 Pub EA
Dev DICE



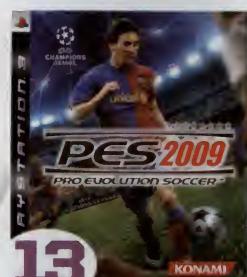
12

Sports

FIFA 09

Impressively strong core gameplay on the pitch, ten-on-ten online matches and a new multiseason Be A Pro mode make this the top-scoring football choice on PS3.

9 Pub EA
Dev EA Canada



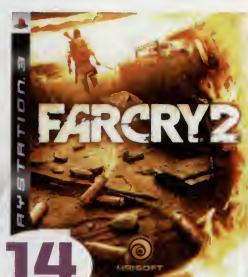
13

Sports

PES 09

Can't match FIFA for licences, but the new Champions League and Become A Legend modes add depth and confirm PES's status as the traditionalist's footy game of choice.

9 Pub Konami
Dev Konami



14

Shooter

Far Cry 2

Dry, dusty, African sandbox run-and-gun action with an ace level editor. Not only do you have to avoid the bullets in your hunt for arms dealer The Jackal, there's malaria to deal with, too.

9 Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft Montreal



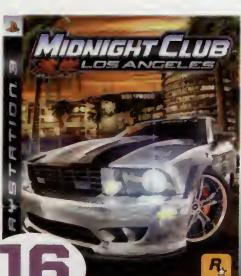
15

Racer

Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. Smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine-tuned cars that make this the best racer yet on PS3.

9 Pub Codemasters
Dev Codemasters



16

Racer

Midnight Club Los Angeles

Rockstar's street racer comes of age, rediscovering tuner culture's West Coast roots with a superb recreation of the City Of Angels and punchy car handling.

9 Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar San Diego



17

Music

Guitar Hero World Tour

Bigger, better, rockier. Battles are out, the set list is super strong, drums and vocals mean you don't need to wait for Rock Band 2, plus there's a studio too!

9 Pub Activision
Dev Neversoft



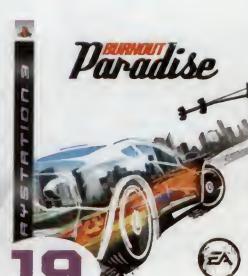
18

Fighter

Soulcalibur IV

Darth Vader aside, this is essential stuff. The swordplay is as accessible and strong as ever, with deep character customisation and online play completing the package.

9 Pub Ubisoft
Dev Namco



19

Racer

Burnout Paradise

The ultra-fast crash-obsessed racer goes open-world with no menus and no lobbies – just a massive city packed with races, events and hidden routes. DLC content is making it even better.

9 Pub EA
Dev Criterion Games



20

Action

Dead Space

Interstellar survival horror that robs from Bioshock, Resident Evil 4 and Event Horizon, but gets away with it thanks to looking beautiful, playing brilliantly and delivering some very big scares.

8 Pub EA
Dev EA Redwood Shores



Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Nathan's nearly-girl, Elena, was given a last-minute pretty-up before the game was shipped.



Metal Gear Solid 4

The MK III Metal Gear is a diddy robot displaying Otacon's face, which Snake controls using an in-game Sixaxis.



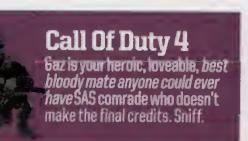
Fallout 3

The ten minutes between meeting and falling in love with Dogmeat and when he dies tragically are the happiest of *Fallout 3*. We miss him.



Portal

The weighted companion cube is your only friend through Portal's lab-rat maze, and is acc to squashing laser sentries.



Call Of Duty 4

Gaz is your heroic, lovable, best bloody mate anyone could ever have SAS comrade who doesn't make the final credits. Sniff.

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

On your disc



So here they are, the winter blues. Never fear, Ratchet is here, and I've got six new demos to keep you busy. Too bloated from all the delicious Christmas food you've been scoffing to attempt any real sport? Get your athletic kicks with NHL 09, NBA Live 09 and Facebreaker instead. Want to fulfil that new year's resolution to learn a new skill? Teach yourself to rock out with Guitar Hero World Tour. Just want to blow things up? Then you'll be wanting Mercenaries 2: World In Flames. And to sweeten the deal I've thrown in 19 of the best demos from our archives, and unmissable videos, too.

Rachel Penny Agenda editor

This month's exclusive highlights...



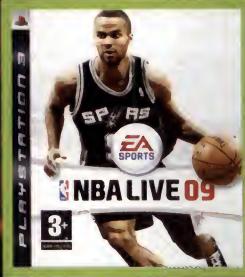
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

Carve a path of destruction through Venezuela in the action game that's all about getting paid for making mess.



NHL 09

If you like speed, brutal action, super tight controls and wearing massive gloves, then this is the only ice hockey game you need to play.



NBA Live 09

Hit the court with b-ball's biggest names. Play a Celtics vs Lakers match and try out the new features – such as the vicious ankle-breaker move.



Facebreaker

This mug-mashing boxer might look like a cartoon, but it packs a mean punch. You even get to take a shot at sex-tape celebrity Kim Kardashian.



Guitar Hero World Tour

The massive music series returns to the stage, and this time it's brought microphones and a drum kit along for the ride. Prove your rock credentials by blasting out tracks including Livin' On A Prayer, Rebel Yell, Are You Gonna Go My Way and the embarrassing Dad's favourite, Eye Of The Tiger.

Also on the disc this month **Playable** Beijing 2008, The Last Guy, Soulcalibur IV, WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2009, Fracture, Pure, Hail To The Chimp, NHL 2K9, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Motorstorm: Pacific Rift, 1942: Joint Strike, FIFA 09, Echochrome, Pixeljunk Eden, Race Driver Grid, Guitar Hero Aerosmith, Everybody's Golf World Tour, Wolf Of The Battlefield: Commando 3, Civilization Revolution, Top Spin 3 **Video** Prince Of Persia, Pro Evolution Soccer 2009, Tomb Raider Underworld, Valkyria Chronicles.



next month

On sale
20 Jan

Subscribe
today on page
36

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK

Killzone 2

Our exclusive review is coming in hot

Altair

Assassin's Creed's mystery man

#23
PLAYSTATION
LEGENDS

PlayStation®
Official Magazine - UK

Altair (pronounced Al-tie-ear) is Arabic and means 'flying eagle', but the name of the man you play is, in fact, Desmond Miles. Confusing, yes, but all to do with Assassin's Creed's pseudoscientific storyline about 'genetic memories' and a DNA-decoding machine called the Animus. Abstergo Industries, its creator, is after the location of something very powerful hidden in 1191's Holy Lands. It's holding Des against his will, and is forcing him to relive the assassin's life of his stab-happy ancestor. The more time he spends inside the Animus the more the lines between the shadowy Altair and Desmond blur...

Smoothest moves

Flashing blade

Altair's low-visibility knife is vicious but somehow merciful in its swiftness. In a very wrong way, obviously. With this brutal weapon of stealth Altair can usually take out his mark before he feels the long sword of the medieval police.



Let's pray together

This handy 'scholar' pose enables you to blend into groups of monks to sneak past guards and avoid messy confrontations. Just think of them as human camouflage, and the perfect remedy for those awkward post-murder social situations.



Leap Of Faith

Rarely actually necessary, the Leap Of Faith is nevertheless endlessly entertaining. The stretching perspective, the eagle's shriek, the rush of air... and how can you not love popping out of the hay, scattering golden straw, once everyone's gone?



Steeple chase

To fill in his map, Altair must climb every tower and spire in a district, and some – such as the giant cathedral in Acre – are staggeringly tall. Despite the beauty of the view, standing on top of them is enough to give David Blaine The Fear.



Killing grounds



Acre

With its cool blue filters (each city has its own colour), historically accurate port and ornately terrifying hospital (also based on reality) the Acre of 1191 is a sensational place.



Jerusalem

Either a melting pot of all faiths or a calamitous flashpoint, depending on your point of view, Jerusalem is thick with Saracen forces and a target for Crusaders.



Damascus

You may not see a blinding light, hear the voice of Jesus or convert to Christianity on the road there, but you will see some nice horses.



Kingdom

The huge expanses beyond the walls of the cities – hidden valleys, scattered villages and winding mountain paths – are a kingdom for any horse!

Friends and foes

Talal

As one of the nine targets Altair is initially given, Talal is a an all-round bad sort. An arrogant, spiteful and vicious slave trader, his death is humanity's gain.



Lucy Stillman

You might recognise Lucy, the blonde scientist in the game's present-day sections. Why, it's TV's Kristen Bell, of *Elle Bishop of Heroes*, renting out her pretty face and expert vocal chords. [Checks wallet for spare change.]



Templars

Protected by both their Christian faith and their masses of armour, these hard-to-kill thugs lurk in every area. Collect their deaths quietly, or suffer badly at their hands.



Beggars

One of gaming's true moral tests, these incredibly irritating civilians stick to you like loony gourpines, tripping you up and even throwing rocks at you.

Assassin's trivia



The fortress stronghold of the assassins, Masyaf, was indeed besieged unsuccessfully by medieval sultan Saladin's forces. In fact, it's still standing today. You can find it in Syria (due west of Cyprus, if that helps).



A sequel is coming – it's a trilogy – but Ubisoft is in no rush. Possible locations include Peru, Mexico, and the Atlantis-like city of Yonaguni in Japan.



What is Abstergo looking for? The Holy Grail, among other things – and it already has some pretty amazing stuff, including artefacts (it doesn't dare use) which manipulate time. Altair would be more daring if he got hold of them...



The word 'assassin' comes from the Arabic 'hashishiyah', which means hashish user. The name comes from the lore that followers of a medieval sect drugged themselves before carrying out assassinations.



The Best Games Of 2008

The results of this year's Golden Joystick Awards are in and you can now find who has claimed the ultimate gaming accolade, a **Golden Joystick Award**.

Whether you're a PC, Playstation, Nintendo or Xbox fan you can find out which game was victorious as well as the **Virgin Media Ultimate Game of the Year**.

Visit
www.goldenjoystick.com

now to get all the news on this year's
biggest gaming awards!



PROUD SPONSOR OF THE GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS

*No matter how skilled a gamer you are, if your broadband's too slow
and your ping times are too high, it's game over.
But only Virgin Media brings you the Mother of all Broadband.
It's fast. It's future proof. It's fibre optic. And it's definitely game on.*

virginmedia.com/mother

3+
www.pegi.info

All rights reserved. "PlayStation" and are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. ©2008 Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Published by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. All rights reserved.
Developed by Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. LocoRoco is a trademark of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

Let's Rock and Roll with it



The LocoRoco are back! Roll, bounce, sing and now swim through 25 colourful stages and enjoy six mini-games. Meet a cast of crazy new characters and collect musical notes to change background music and unlock bonuses. Get your LocoRoco rolling!

LocoRoco.com



PLAYSTATION 3

